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Election panel reinstates names on voters' list. PAGE 2

CPA cites Tinian's SN Five for alleged violations. PAGE 7

Include Philippines in visa waiver program, says Guam senator

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

Unlike others who have focused on requesting for the inclusion of Russia and China in the joint Guam-CNMI visa waiver program, Guam Sen. Judith P. Guthertz is pushing for the inclusion of the Philippines under the proposed program.

Guthertz, the chairperson of the Guam Legislature's Committee on Military Buildup and Homeland Security, is the latest person to comment on the proposed regulations regarding the new

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Kilili to DHS: Create visas for IRs

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

The Department of Homeland Security currently has no plans to issue visas to immediate relatives of residents' once federal immigration laws are extended to the Commonwealth in June, according to CNMI Delegate Gregorio "Kilili" Sablan.

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TAMI HEILEMANN, DOI PHOTOGRAPHER

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar presides over the White House Interagency Group on Insular Affairs meeting yesterday that was attended by U.S. island leaders, including CNMI Gov. Benigno R. Fitial and CNMI Delegate Gregorio Kilili Sablan. Inset, U.S. island leaders at the Interagency Group session included, from left, U.S. Rep. Gregorio Camacho Sablan of the Northern Mariana Islands; U.S. Rep. Eni Faleomavaega of American Samoa; Gov. Benigno Fitial of the Northern Mariana Islands; Gov. Togiola Tulafono of American Samoa; Secretary Salazar; Gov. John deJongh of the U.S. Virgin Islands; U.S. Congresswoman Donna Christensen of the U.S. Virgin Islands; Gov. Felix Camacho of Guam; and U.S. Congresswoman Madeleine Bordallo of Guam.

Land lease woes stalling Tinian casino investment

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

The $200 million to $500 million hotel resort and casino project on Tinian by Neo Gold Wings Paradise is being stalled by the Department of Public Land's planned reduction in the size of public land to be leased, from the original 300 hectares to only about 160 hectares, among other issues.

Sen. Jude U. Hofschneider, chairman of the Senate Committee on Resources, Economic Development and Programs, yesterday expressed hope the land lease issue

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A 'human face' for those affected by federalization

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

Human rights advocate Wendy Doromal, along with the United Workers Movement NMI, has initiated a letter writing campaign meant to put "human face" on foreign contract workers, immediate relatives of U.S. and Freely Associated States citizens, and others in the CNMI who will be affected by the June 1 start of transition to federal immigration.

The letter writing campaign is being launched almost simultaneously with Delegate Gregorio "Kilili" C. Sablan voicing of his concerns about the unavailability of U.S. visas for IRs of U.S. and FAS citizens during the annual meeting of island governors in Washington, D.C. headed by

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OPINION METER

This week's poll:
Is the CNMI government doing enough to cut down on unnecessary spending?

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149 DAYS without a government budget for FY 2009

INSIDE

Brighter Future
President Obama promised the nation that he would lead it from a dire "day of reckoning" to a brighter future.
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Satellite or Missile
North Korea has declared it is making "brisk headway" in plans to send a satellite into orbit.
ASIA...Page 15

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Local

Election panel reinstates names on voters' list

BY MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Election Commission has reversed the notice it sent to "failed" voters early this month after the agency determined that the last election in November 2008 was not a general poll and cannot be used as a basis to eliminate individual names on the voters' list.

Acting executive director Julita A. Villagomez disclosed this on Tuesday, saying this was the recommendation of the agency's legal counsel after carefully reviewing the statute.

Last Feb. 4, the commission sent letters to 2,701 individuals, informing them that their failure to participate in the last election makes them "failed" voters and that they need to re-register for their ballots to be counted in the upcoming general election.

The "failed" voters included both absentee voters who did not participate in last year's poll and those who were on-island but opted not to join the elections.

Villagomez on Tuesday disclosed that a second notice was sent this week reversing the first notice.

"The Nov. 4, 2008 federal general/local special election was not considered a general election, so we would need to reinstate your name on the list of registered voters to have you eligible to vote in the upcoming Nov. 7, 2009, general election," the second notice stated.

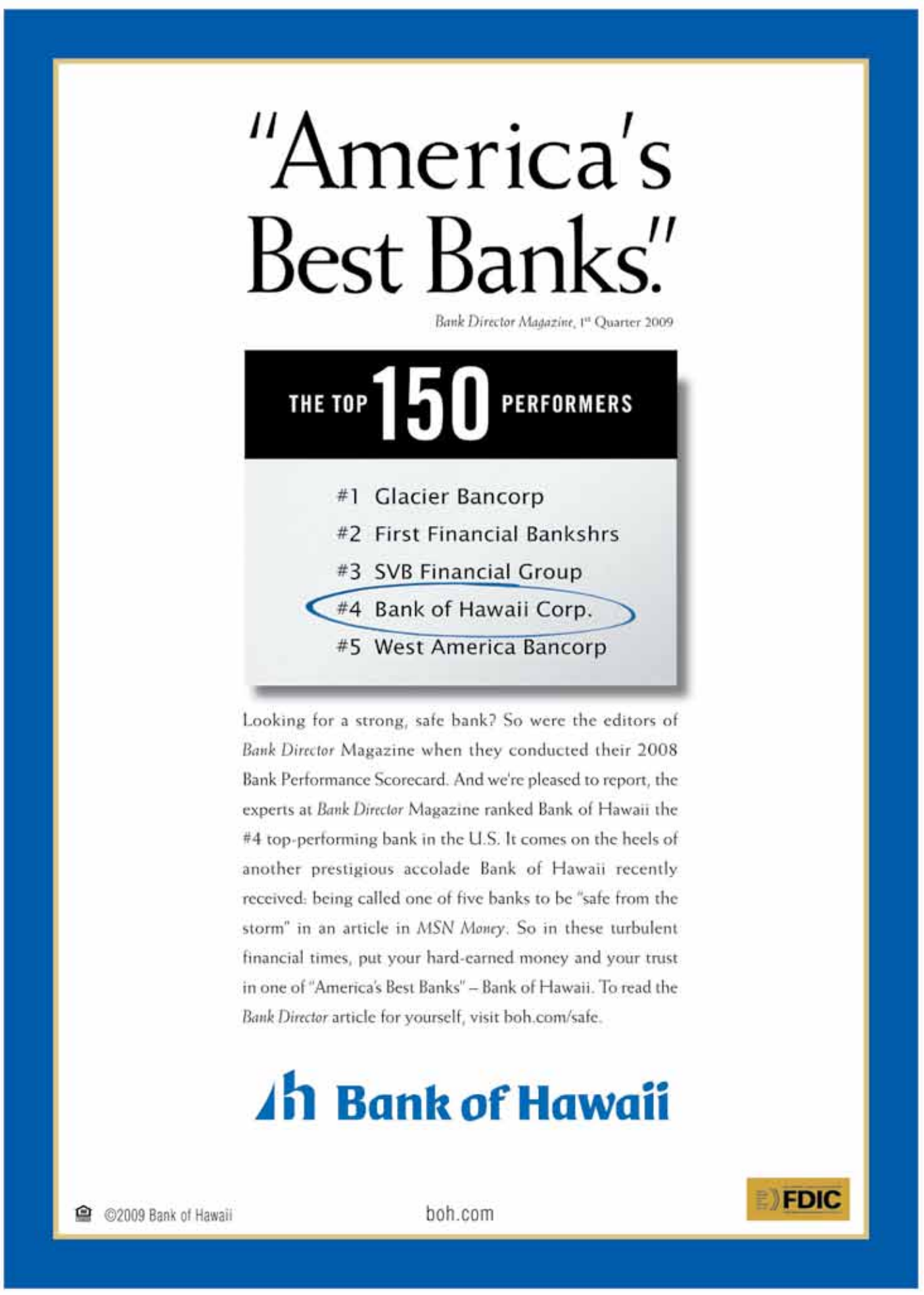
According to statute, the commission shall remove the name of a registered voter from the register in the following cases: If the person did not vote in a preceding general election. General election is defined as an election held throughout the Commonwealth every two years on the first Saturday in November.

The "reverse" notice also indicated that if a person already re-registered to vote for the Nov. 7, 2009, general election, that will not interfere with their voter registration status.

The agency apologized for the inconvenience caused by its first notice.

The commission earlier said it is expecting a high turnout of about 80 percent this general election.

As of September 2008, the number of registered voters in the CNMI was 12,947. The number may go up to 15,000, as indicated by the 2005 poll.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Tinian certified by NWS as TsunamiReady, StormReady

ON THE NET

- NOAA: http://www.noaa.gov
- NOAA's National Weather Service: http://www.nws.noaa.gov
- Guam Forecast Office: http://www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/
- Tsunamis in the Marianas: http://library.lanl.gov/tsunami/ts203.pdf
- TsunamiReady program: http://www.tsunamiready.noaa.gov
- StromReady program: http://www.stormready.noaa.gov

The National Weather Service has recognized Tinian as the third western North Pacific location to become TsunamiReady and StormReady. Tinian joins Guam, Saipan and 60 other TsunamiReady communities in 10 states and 1,413 StormReady communities in 50 states, Puerto Rico, Guam and the CNMI.

"On behalf of the island of Tinian, the Emergency Management Office and our partners in the emergency management and response community, we are very pleased to receive the TsunamiReady and StormReady recognition," said Tinian Mayor Jose San Nicolas. "It acknowledges our experience in dealing with disasters, particularly typhoons, our commitment to public safety, and the value we place on education and preparedness."

Jeff LaDouce, director of the National Weather Service Pacific Region, said that San Nicolas worked hard to earn the TsunamiReady and StormReady designations, making it the third location in the western North Pacific to achieve this status.

"Through the StormReady program, Tinian will be better prepared to help protect the lives and property of its residents and visitors during severe weather events. The island should take great pride in having gone the extra mile go provide its residents and visitors with the added measure of protection that the StormReady and TsunamiReady programs afford," LaDouce said.

Today, Tinian officials will be presented with a recognition letter and special TsunamiReady and StormReady signs in an 11am ceremony at the Tinian Dynasty Hotel. These special designations must be renewed every three years.

To be recognized as TsunamiReady and StormReady, a community must:

- Establish a 24-hour warning point and emergency operations center;
- Create a system that monitors local weather and ocean conditions;
- Develop multiple ways to receive tsunami and severe weather warnings, and alert the public in a timely manner;
- Develop a formal hazard plan and conduct emergency exercises; and
- Promote public readiness through community education.

Tinian's history of typhoons and earthquakes and its geographical isolation have spurred a commitment and determination on the part of CNMI government agencies to do everything possible to prepare for, protect from, and mitigate against the threat of disasters for Tinian residents and visitors alike. They have a great track record.

Over the years, Tinian has experienced considerable typhoon activity—over 150 in the last 40 years. Dozens of high-wind and storm surge events from typhoon have caused millions of dollars of damage. The Mariana Islands also have a history of tsunamis. Three have caused damage at more than one location—in 1849, 1892 and in 1993—and up to six other locally generated tsunamis have been observed in the islands in the past 200 years. Of particular concern are the volcanoes to the north and the Marianas Trench to the east, one of the world's deepest trenches with a history of strong seismic events. A small section of the Trench near Tinian has a shallow subduction plate, the type that can produce earthquake that trigger tsunamis. The magnitude 8.1 Aug. 8, 1993, earthquake occurred not far from there. ***(NOAA)***

House defers vote on budget override—for the third time

The House of Representatives once against deferred a vote on overriding the governor's veto of the $156.76 million fiscal year 2009 budget bill.

With a few members absent at the start of the session, the members held off on the vote but have kept it on the calendar for a future session.

This is the third time the House has deferred voting on the override. The Senate earlier overrode the governor's veto.

Gov. Benigno Fitial vetoed the latest budget attempt because of a lack of austerity measures in the bill.

In December, Fitial vetoed the Legislature's first budget of $165 million, citing an $8 million drop in projected local revenue. The latest budget reduced the spending level by $8 million but did not include austerity measures like unpaid holidays. The House was unsuccessful in overriding that veto.

It has been 149 days since Oct. 1, 2008, when the fiscal year 2009 budget was supposed to be in place. ***(Kristi Eaton)***

Galvin quits as MCS school principal

BY MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

Galvin Deleon Guerrero, who recently announced his bid to become lieutenant governor of gubernatorial bet Juan N. Babauta under the Republican ticket, has formally stepped down as school principal of Mount Carmel School to pursue his political career.

His resignation was effective last Feb. 9.

In an e-mail yesterday, Deleon Guerrero described his decision as "trading the joys of education for the pain of politics."

"Yes, I did resign as the principal of MCS which became effective on Feb. 9 this year. It was a very difficult and sad decision to make," he told *Saipan Tribune*.

Guerrero

He disclosed that his decision was also intended to spare the school from the "impact" of politics arising from his candidacy.

"After all, to some degree, I have traded the joy of education for the pain of politics…but I love MCS and because I love the school, I didn't want to subject the school to any political backlash or political interference that could result from my candidacy," he said.

Deleon Guerrero, who is also an Education Board member, vowed to serve the body up to the prescribed period allowed under the law.

A candidate must resign from the board upon certification of candidacy by the Election Commission, pursuant to Article VIII of the CNMI Constitution.

"Until such time, however, as a board, we have decided that I will stay on board to continue working on important policy initiatives, especially the recent American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, which will fund key improvements in our schools. For that, I am happy to have the opportunity to continue serving our children and our teachers," Deleon Guerrero said.

Yesterday, MCS president Margaret C. Dela Cruz confirmed Deleon Guerrero's resignation and the school's intention to seek a replacement for the position.

Based on the school's immediate job vacancy announcement, the minimum requirement for the post includes graduation from an accredited college or university with a bachelor's degree. Qualified candidates will earn from $32,000 to $33,948 per annum.

MCS is home to over 400 students with over 20 professional faculty and staff.

House education committee sets hearing with NMC's Fernandez

BY MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The chairman of the House Committee on Health, Education and Welfare, Rep. Ralph Torres, wants the Northern Marianas College to provide the panel updates on its work to reaffirm the institution's accreditation.

In a letter to NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez yesterday, the lawmaker asked the official to provide the committee with some documents when she meets with panel members on Thursday.

Torres

"The committee has been willing, and continue to, offer its assistance and support to NMC. It is imperative that we have complete transparency and accountability of our only postsecondary institution," Torres told Fernandez, adding that he looks forward to the conversation with the president on Feb. 26.

The committee chair wants five particular documents be submitted in the president's report to the panel. These include the requirements for Recommendations 1 and II and the institution's plan to address them.

Because the Legislature provides funding assistance for the operations and programs of the college, the status of NMC's budget, which will include the cost of operations, salaries, and amount of federal assistance provided to the students and the college, are also asked for submission.

Other factors and documents related to the finances and annual budget of the college are also requested in the report.

Torres' committee wants a brief summary of the degrees and courses offered at the campus, as well as the number of graduates each year.

A summary about the college's programs and services provided to student recruitment and retention as well as updates on student enrollment are also required by panel members.

Torres, in the same letter, commended Fernandez for her management's dedication in prioritizing students.

NMC was placed on continued show-cause status by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges after it "partially" comply with the last two remaining concerns that deals with program review, assessment and financial planning of the college.

It was given until April to submit the supplemental report in time for the decision to be made by the accrediting team in June 2009.

WASC had originally cited six specific concerns on the audit findings of the college in FY 2006. Of these issues, four were completely addressed by the institution as stated in the self-study and progress reports last year.

NMC, during the duration of show-cause, remains accredited by the commission and credits are transferable.

Ex-garment factory worker missing

A former employee of the defunct Marianas Garment Manufacturing has been missing since Jan. 6, according to the Department of Public Safety yesterday.

Renhong Zhao, 45, male, Chinese, of San Antonio, described as having a slight build, was last seen by his brother at his house in San Antonio when the former returned from fishing last Jan. 6.

DPS spokesperson Lei Ogumoro said the brother reported Zhao's disappearance only last Sunday after several attempts to locate the former garment worker failed.

Ogumoro said that police are following up the case.

"DPS is seeking the assistance of the community for any information regarding the whereabouts of Zhao. Should you have any information, please contact the DPS Criminal Investigation Bureau at 664-9042/9045/9050," the spokesperson said.

A fire broke out at MGM's factory in Chalan Piao last July 9. Arson investigators determined that the cause was accidental.

MGM ceased active garment manufacturing last Dec. 8, but the factory officially closed only last Feb. 7. ***(Ferdie de la Torre)***

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US House panel holds hearing on submerged lands issue

WASHINGTON, D.C.—The House Subcommittee on Insular Affairs, Oceans and Wildlife will be holding a hearing today on the bill introduced by CNMI Delegate Gregorio C. Sablan relating to the submerged lands issue.

The committee, chaired by Del. Madeleine Z. Bordallo (D-GU), will also hold a hearing on a bill that Bordallo herself introduced relating to the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000.

The hearing is scheduled for Feb. 25, 2008, at 2pm in Washington (5am today here in the Commonwealth).

The legislative hearing will tackle the following bills:

■ H.R. 860 (Bordallo): To reauthorize the Coral Reef Conservation Act of 2000, and for other purposes. *"Coral Reef Conservation Act Reauthorization and Enhancement Amendments of 2009"*

■ H.R. 934 (Sablan): To convey certain submerged lands to the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands in order to give that territory the same benefits in its submerged lands as Guam, the Virgin Islands, and American Samoa have in their submerged lands.

Witnesses for Sablan's bill are CNMI Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, Guam Gov. Felix P. Camacho, and American Samoa Gov. Togiola T.A. Tulafono. ***(PR)***

HUMAN

From Page 1

Interior Secretary Ken Salazar. ***(See related story)***

Doromal said the campaign will give a voice to the huge population of CNMI nonresidents who are not represented and have no vote in matters that impact their lives and the lives of their children and families.

"The officials drafting regulations are thousands of miles from the CNMI and have not met with these people directly. The letters will give them a chance to get a clearer picture of who the people affected by Public Law 110-229 are, the contributions that they make to the community, and why they call the Commonwealth home," said Doromal in a statement.

Rabby Syed, president of the United Workers Movement CNMI, encouraged the community yesterday to join the campaign, which solicits letters from all categories of people who will be affected by federalization.

These people, according to Doromal, are guest workers, U.S. citizen children of foreign contract workers, spouses and children of citizens from FAS, alien spouses and children of U.S. citizens, CNMI permanent residents, widows and widowers of U.S. citizen spouses, and alien spouses divorced from their U.S. citizen spouses.

"Letters from supportive resident relatives, friends and employers of foreign contract workers and others among the various nonresident categories are also encouraged and welcome," said Doromal.

The letters will be scanned and e-mailed to Doromal as they are received, and the original copies will be mailed to her.

Doromal said she will hand-deliver the letters to the secretaries of the departments of Homeland Security, State, Labor, Justice and Interior, as well as members of the U.S. House and Senate Resources Committees that are directly involved in drafting policy and regulations for P.L. 110-229 or the Consolidated Natural Resources Act.

Besides the letter writing campaign, the United Workers Movement NMI is also gathering signatures in support of waiving "green card" application fees for IRs of U.S. and FAS citizens.

The group will be organizing meetings on Saipan, Tinian, and Rota to write and collect letters.

Doromal encouraged those interested to join the campaign to visit her website, http://unheardnomore.blogspot.com, through e-mail at doromal@earthlink.net or at tel. no. (407) 823 8214 for details and suggestions on what to include in the letters. Syed can also be reached via email at rabbysayed@yahoo.com or through 285-3307.

LAND

From Page 1

will be resolved soon to get the project going.

"We hope to get the ball rolling again for the two parties," he said.

A joint House-Senate session on the proposed land lease agreement between DPL and Neo Gold Wings Paradise scheduled for yesterday morning was cancelled until further notice because of likely changes in the proposed land lease deal.

"The reason why we cancelled the joint session is because there are some amendments that need to be made on the lease [agreement] based on DPL and Neo Gold wings meeting," Hofschneider said. "Initially it was 300 hectares...DPL wants to reduce the size to 1,600 million square meters or 160 hectares."

DPL Secretary John Del Rosario could not be reached for comment yesterday.

Hofschneider said a joint Senate-House committee will meet with DPL and Neo Gold Wings representatives today to try to resolve the issue.

The senator said committee members want DPL to stick with the original 300 hectares of land to be leased to Neo Gold Wings Paradise.

"Our suggestion is to allow them up to 300 hectares with the condition of developing it as they go," he said.

Neo Gold Wings Paradise is proposing to lease approximately 300 hectares of public land on Tinian's Pina Area for the construction of a "six-star, 1,000-room mega hotel resort and casino."

Two other investors are proposing to build casino and hotel resorts on Tinian, which so far has only one operating casino, the Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino.

The Senate Committee on Resources, Economic Development and Programs, chaired by Hofschneider, and the House Committee on Natural Resources, chaired by Rep. Ramon A. Tebuteb, held a public hearing on the proposed land agreement on Feb. 12 at the Tinian courthouse.

KILILI

From Page 1

Sablan called on the Department of Homeland Security and the U.S. State Department to work together to develop a way for immediate relatives of CNMI residents to enter and leave the CNMI legally once federal immigration laws extend to the Commonwealth on June 1.

During yesterday's annual meeting of the White House Interagency Group on Insular Affairs that was also participated in by Gov. Benigno R. Fitial, Sablan voiced his concern that there is no visa for IRs, meaning that starting June 1, IRs will not be able to re-enter the CNMI if they leave and do not have a visa.

"There are IRs who have been living in the Commonwealth with their families for upwards of 20 years," Sablan said. "And under the new law, these IRs may remain in the CNMI as long as they have a valid IR visa issued by the CNMI. However, if they must leave the CNMI for a medical emergency or any other reason, these IRs won't be able to re-enter the NMI without a visa issued by the U.S."

The State Department is the U.S. agency that issues visas. The Department of Homeland Security manages the border entry points. Sablan said that Homeland Security had informed him that it was not aware of any State Department plans to issue visas in the NMI.

"I am concerned that this means that there are no plans," the delegate said. "Or worse, if there are plans, Homeland Security, the department that is responsible for accepting the visas at the border, doesn't know about them. Either way it's clear that the State Department and the Department of Homeland Security need to start talking with each other. And they need to make sure that families in the CNMI with IRs are not separated as a result of federal immigration control."

Homeland Security assistant secretary Richard Barth and Glyn Davis, principal deputy assistant secretary for Australia, New Zealand and Pacific Affairs, were among those at the meeting.

Visa waiver rumors

Also, a spokesman for the Department of Homeland Security yesterday addressed rumors circulating among nonresident workers relating to the visa waiver program.

Because the proposed joint Guam-CNMI visa waiver program will allow for travel between the islands for up to 45 days, some nonresident workers who will legally be in the CNMI after June 1 believe they will be able to travel to Guam freely. Currently, nonresident workers need a visa to enter Guam.

"In order to be admissible in Guam, the traveler would either have to be a citizen of a participating country under the Guam-CNMI visa waiver program, the 'national' visa waiver program, or have a non-immigrant visa that would allow for travel to the United States," said Michael Balero, public affairs liaison for U.S. Customs and Border Protection. "At this time, the regulation governing nonresident worker classifications is still under development within the Department of Homeland Security."

Citizens from the following countries will be eligible for participation in the Guam-CNMI visa waiver program: Australia, Brunei, Hong Kong, Japan, Malaysia, Nauru, New Zealand, Papua New Guinea, South Korea, Singapore and the United Kingdom. Taiwan residents who begin travel in Taiwan and fly to Guam without an intermediate layover or stop en route are also eligible.

Stimulus bill

During yesterday's IGIA meeting at the Interior headquarters, CNMI Delegate Sablan, along with Guam Delegate Madeleine Bordallo and Virgin Islands Gov. John deJongh, also pointed to the need for cooperation between the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Education in the management of the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, signed into law last week.

Title XIV of the law appropriates up to $268 million for the four insular areas represented at yesterday's meeting: American Samoa, Guam, the Northern Marianas, and the Virgin Islands. The Secretary of Education is supposed to hand out the funds according to need in the islands. But he is supposed to consult with the Secretary of Interior.

"The Secretary of Education certainly has the resources to decide when it comes to education," Sablan said. "However, with respect to other functions of government the Secretary of the Interior—and the Office of Insular Affairs under the Secretary—is the expert."

Sablan said he wanted to be sure that the new money coming from the federal government is spent wisely and well to create private sector jobs, to maintain government services in the Marianas, and to build a base for future economic health.

Working relationship

Secretary of the Interior Ken Salazar, who presided over the IGIA meeting, promised U.S. island leaders yesterday that he will promote a more active and effective working relationship with them through the White House Interagency Group on Insular Affairs.

Salazar also discussed President Obama's commitment to transparency and accountability for investments in the islands from the economic recovery plan. Under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009, the island territories receive funding through formula and competitive grants from a host of federal departments and agencies.

Major issues before the Interagency Group include coordinating with the Department of Defense on the relocation of U.S. military forces from Okinawa to Guam; a request for an extension beyond the June 1, 2009, for federalization of immigration in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands; health care in the insular areas; and the minimum wage law's impact on the islands.

The governors and delegates each submitted a list of their priority concerns for 2009, which are posted on the Office of Insular Affairs website at www.doi.gov/oia. The major issues include: economic development, minimum wage policy, the planned military expansion in Guam, rum excise tax levels, visa issues, infrastructure financing and local Veterans Affairs services in the Northern Mariana Islands.

Staff from the Office of Insular Affairs will be following up with federal agencies to address these priorities.

INCLUDE

From Page 1

visa waiver program that is part of the implementation of section 702 of the Consolidated Natural Resources Act of 2008. The Act will extend federal immigration laws to the CNMI. The start date is scheduled for June 1, although a delay of up to six months is possible.

CNMI officials, business leaders and community members have expressed their concern that the Commonwealth would lose the Russia and Chinese tourists— two emerging markets—if the countries were not included in the waiver.

Guthertz, however, has focused her comments on the importance of including the Philippines within the program.

"The Republic of the Philippines should definitely be included on the list of countries included in the Guam and Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands visa waiver program," she said. "This would be of significant economic benefit to our people. More importantly, we need the visa waiver program for the [Philippines] because of the close family and cultural ties between us. The Visit Families and Friends numbers would be the most important reason for including the [Philippines] in the visa waiver program for Guam."

The lawmaker notes that the country has a large presence in Guam's history and much of the Chamorro culture is adopted from the Philippine culture.

Local families, therefore, have many relatives residing in the Philippines and visit the country often.

"However, it is a one way system because the relatives in the [Philippines] cannot get visas to visit their relatives here on our islands without lengthy and difficult application process for a regular visa," she added.

For example, the lawmaker said, many families want relatives residing in the Philippines to watch their sons or daughters graduate from the University of Guam but are unable to because of the difficulty in obtaining a visa.

Also, Filipino business leaders may want to visit Guam on short notice but will be unable to if a visa is required.

In the visa waiver program interim final rule, the Department of Homeland Security notes that China, Russia and the Philippines are the three largest tourism markets that will be impacted by the program because they will be excluded.

In her comments, Guthertz said emphasis must be placed on the federal government's investment of personnel and material in order to establish a presence in Guam and the CNMI with reference to the visa waiver program.

"We are fortunate in this regard that there is a DHS boundary between Hawaii and the mainland separating them from Guam and the CNMI," she said. "If any foreign visitors overstay their time they will be unable to proceed on into the U.S. interior because their paperwork check at the CNMI and Guam airports. Further, all of the military bases on Guam are well protected so there is no danger from foreigners holding visa waiver documents."

Finally, the senator asks DHS to consider hiring local graduates from the University of Guam, Guam Community College and Northern Marianas College as the agency develops a presence on the islands.

Besides Guthertz, as of yesterday 16 other people have commented on the Federal Register website about the proposed regulations, less than a month before the March 16 deadline for public comments.

Federalization lawsuit may not be legal—House

By KRISTI EATON
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REPORTER

With concerns raised about the legality of Gregory Baka holding the position of Acting Attorney General, members of the House of Representatives yesterday questioned whether the CNMI is legally able to bring the federalization lawsuit against the U.S. government.

The House and Senate believe Baka is violating the law by holding the position of Acting Attorney General. He succeeded to the position of Acting Attorney General on Sept. 28 in the absence of an appointed Attorney General, after Matthew Gregory stepped down. A few weeks ago, Baka submitted a letter to the U.S. District Court saying that the Jenner & Block law firm is authorized to represent the CNMI in the lawsuit, which seeks to halt the implementation of federal immigrations laws to the CNMI. The U.S. government argues that only the Office of the Attorney General can file a lawsuit on behalf of the Commonwealth.

Questions about Baka's standing bring more issues to light about the lawsuit, Rep. Rosemond Santos said during a House session yesterday.

"Supposedly, Mr. Baka authorized them to represent the CNMI, and that in and of itself may be questionable because his position may now be questionable. So there are those issues now as well," she said.

Rep. Tina Sablan said when she spoke with Baka over the phone recently he said the authorization was implicit. Baka said he did not issue the initial authorization, the representative said. Although, he admitted to her, his unwillingness to "unauthorize" the lawsuit amounts to an implicit authorization on his part. The lawsuit was filed Sept. 12, before Baka succeeded Gregory.

In an October letter to Sablan, Baka said the OAG has referred hundreds of pleadings annually to outside counsel without the Attorney General's personal review or signature.

"Yet as the Deputy Attorney General (currently Acting AG since Sept. 28, 2008) I did personally review and comment upon various drafts of the complaint in our Section 903 litigation," he wrote to the representative.

"I think it's really high time we get to the bottom of this. Is this a legal lawsuit?" Sablan asked during yesterday's House session.

House Speaker Arnold Palacios also inquired whether Baka is authorized to sign off on anything if he is an Acting Attorney General,

"If we can get to the bottom of that, that in of itself is important," Palacios said.

In January, Santos, chairperson of the Judiciary and Governmental Operations Committee, wrote Gov. Benigno Fitial, stating that Baka is violating the law by holding the position of Acting AG.

"It has been more than 30 days since Mr. Baka's temporary appointment as Acting Attorney General and such appointment has not been forwarded to the Legislature. As a result, Mr. Baka's appointment is in violation of existing law," Santos wrote.

Jury finds man guilty in 3rd largest 'ice' haul

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The federal jury yesterday returned with a guilty verdict in the case of a former garment worker who reportedly yielded the third largest haul of methamphetamine hydrochloride or "ice" in the CNMI so far.

The jurors found Yong Ming Song guilty of possession of a controlled substance within 1,000 feet of a school with intent to distribute. The jurors determined that Song intended to distribute 149.4 grams of "ice."

U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Alex R. Munson set the sentencing for June 2, 2009 at 9am. Munson ordered the U.S. Probation Office to submit a pre-sentence report on or before April 29, 2009.

The judge remanded the 42-year-old Song to the custody of the U.S. Marshal.

After deliberating on the case starting Tuesday afternoon, the 12 jurors resumed their deliberations yesterday and informed the court at 11:26am that they were ready to return a verdict.

A special agent of the Drug Enforcement Administration stated in his report that on Sept. 11, 2008, at 10:40pm, Police Sergeant Anthony Macaranas and Police Officer Daniel Punimata were cruising along Beach Road in San Jose aboard a patrol car when they saw a white Toyota Corolla driving south.

The two officers noticed that the driver, later identified as Song, was not wearing a seatbelt. As the car entered the Susupe area, Macaranas activated the police car's emergency lights and stopped the vehicle. Punimata searched the vehicle with Song's consent and found the illegal drugs hidden in soap boxes placed in a duffel bag.

During Tuesday's closing arguments, Assistant U.S. Attorney James Benedetto, citing statements of witnesses and Song's as well as other pieces of evidence, argued that Song does not have a defense that could stand up in this case.

The prosecutor pointed to a hollowed-out book, Western Union receipts of $10,000 sent to China in two days, and the use of an "ice" trafficker's cell phone as evidence of Song's knowing participation in the "ice" trafficking. Benedetto pointed out that 149 grams of "ice" worth between $60,000 to $75,000 were seized from Song's vehicle.

Song's case is Benedetto's first trial as federal prosecutor.

Defense attorney Joey San Nicolas pegged his arguments on Song's story that he just picked up a package that a friend had asked him to get, not knowing that it contained drugs. He said that Song trusted his friend and, in doing so, got into "something dangerous."

Mariana Islands Range Complex Draft EIS/OEIS Available for Public Comment Jan. 30, 2009 – March 16, 2009

On behalf of the U.S. Defense Representative Guam, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, and Republic of Palau, the U.S. Navy has prepared a Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Overseas Environmental Impact Statement (EIS/OEIS) for the Mariana Islands Range Complex. The Draft EIS/OEIS is available for public comment through March 16, 2009.

Where to get the EIS/OEIS: Visit www.MarianasRangeComplexEIS.com to download the document or to find a library that has a copy.

The U.S. Defense Representative Wants Your Input!

The U.S. Defense Representative is hosting open house sessions and public hearings to receive oral or written comments on the Draft EIS/OEIS.

Where to submit comments:

Submit comments via the online form at www.MarianasRangeComplexEIS.com or send written comments via postal mail or e-mail to:

Mariana Islands Range Complex EIS
258 Makalapa Drive, Suite 100
Attn: EV2
Pearl Harbor, HI 96860-3134
E-mail: marianas.tap.eis@navy.mil

All comments must be postmarked by March 16, 2009.

Proposed Action

The U.S. Defense Representative proposes to support and conduct current, emerging and future training and research, development, test and evaluation training activities in the Mariana Islands Study Area. Three alternatives are analyzed in the Draft EIS/OEIS. Under the No Action Alternative, military activities would continue at current levels. Alternatives 1 and 2 propose increases in military activity and the number and types of training events, and enhancements to range capabilities. Alternative 2 also proposes new activities related to additional Major Exercises.

Open House Sessions & Public Hearings
Open House: 5 - 9 p.m.
Public Hearing: 7 - 9 p.m.

Guam:
February 19, 2009
Jesus & Eugenia Leon Guerrero School of Business and Public Administration Building
The Anthony Leon Guerrero Multi-Purpose Room 129
University of Guam
Mangilao, Guam 96923

Guam:
February 20, 2009
Southern High School Cafeteria
#1 Jose Perez Leon Guerrero Drive
Santa Rita, Guam 96915

Saipan:
February 23, 2009
Multi-Purpose Center in Susupe

Tinian:
February 24, 2009
Tinian Elementary School Cafeteria
San Jose Village
Tinian, MP 96952

Rota:
February 26, 2009
Sinapolo Elementary School Cafeteria
Sinapolo I

For more information visit
www.MarianasRangeComplexEIS.com

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†Bankrate.com's Safe & Sound® rating based on data as of 9/30/08.

'Exchange students not affected by federalization'

BY MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The anticipated implementation of the federalization of local labor and immigration systems in June is expected not to negatively impact the cultural exchange students, majority of whom are from Japan and South Korea.

This was the belief of Saipan Mayor Juan B. Tudela, who administers the traditional Japan-NMI Cultural Exchange Program, which brings foreign students and vice versa to both countries.

Each year, the mayor said, an estimated hundred-plus Japanese and local students participate in the exchange program, which aims to enhance cultural awareness and appreciation among and between local and foreign students.

It was earlier disclosed by the Department of Homeland Security representatives that in order to honor the validity of stay and study of foreign students on island, they are required to obtain a student visa: "F" for academic and "M" for vocational programs.

In the case of cultural exchange program, Tudela is optimistic that the federalization will not have much effect on the entry of foreign students to the CNMI.

"The students under the CNMI-Japanese cultural exchange program are traveling under the special student visa program that entitles them to a week's stay on the island. I don't think federalization will change the process for these special students who are on educational trips to the CNMI," the mayor told *Saipan Tribune* during a ceremony at the Sugar King last Friday.

However, in admitting that nothing is certain until the actual regulations are enforced, the mayor said his office will do its best to continue the educational trips between the two countries.

Tudela is mulling to use tourist visas for Japanese students in case their short stay will not qualify them for a student visa under the new process.

"If there will be concerns on securing the student visa for them, we may look at how the tourist visa can be applied to these students who will stay on island for only a week," he said.

Every year, the mayor's office selects a number of local students to travel to Japan during winter while their foreign counterparts have their trip every summer here.

"It is an important program that I will ask for continuity. The lessons and experiences these students gain from educational trips are valuable. This is something that I don't think will stop because of federalization," he said.

Tudela specifically cited the values obtained by students in interacting and actually living with their host families for some days.

During the weeklong trip, foreign students mingle with local families and students.

Grace Christian Academy principal Faith Dela Rosa said yesterday that she's also expecting the "new process at immigration" not to create much difficulty in the travel of foreign students to her school.

"I don't think [federalization] would affect our cultural exchange programs at GCA," she said.

Dela Rosa said the special groups of children from Japanese schools use tourist visas when entering CNMI.

GCA is host to two Japanese schools every year, bringing in approximately 60 students on separate occasions.

In October, two Japanese schools are scheduled to continue the "tradition."

"We're still expecting them in October," she said, emphasizing the worthy experiences gained from the "interaction" between local and foreign kids.

Other schools that also accommodate cultural exchange students on island every year include Marianas High School, Kagman High School, Mount Carmel School, Saipan Southern High School, and other elementary schools.

HAIDEE V. EUGENIO

WELCOME TO SAIPAN
From left, N.E.O. cruise shore operations director Hiroyuki Tsunori, *Pacific Venus* purser Masae Miyamae, and Pacific Development Inc. assistant general manager Masanori Takahashi pose in front of the Japanese luxury cruise ship *Pacific Venus* at the Port of Saipan in Lower Base yesterday while waiting for the return of the 288 passengers to the ship after a few hours of shopping and sightseeing on the island before heading for Yokohama, Japan.

EMO warns of rough seas until Saturday

Breezy trade winds generating combined seas near 10 feet will cause dangerous conditions for small vessels in coastal waters for the next several days, according to a notice issued yesterday afternoon by the Emergency Management Office. EMO warned of rough seas, especially on east facing exposures.

EMO is strongly advising the general public—especially beachgoers, fishermen, tourists, swimmers, divers and surfers—to avoid venturing near exposed reefs and beaches. Exercise caution when entering or leaving harbors, especially on north and east facing shores.

The small craft advisory will be in effect through Saturday afternoon, EMO said. A small craft advisory means that seas 10 feet or greater and sustained winds of 22 knots or higher are expected to produce conditions hazardous to small craft.

Today, EMO predicts east winds of 20 knots, with gusts of up to 30 knots. Wind waves will be 7 to 9 ft, while east swells will be 5 ft. The same conditions apply tonight, except for east swells, which are seen to climb to 6 ft.

On Friday, east wind will be 20 to 25 knots, with wind waves of 7 to 9 ft. East swell is seen at 6 ft.

On Saturday, east wind will be 20 knots with gusts of up to 30 knots and wind waves at 7 to 9 ft. East swell is at 5 ft.

On Sunday, east wind is projected at 15 to 20 knots, wind waves 6 to 8 ft, and east swell 5 ft.

Information is based on the data received from the National Weather Service in Tiyan, Guam. ***(EMO)***

CPA cites Tinian's SN Five for alleged violations

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Ports Authority has cited a cargo shipping company on Tinian for violating the agency's rules and regulations in transporting products between Saipan and Tinian.

SN Five Shipping Co. was issued a notice of violation by the agency after the company was found operating without proper documents.

CPA executive director Efrain F. Camacho yesterday confirmed that the notice has been sent to the shipping firm and that CPA is awaiting its response.

"CPA found that SN Five is operating without the proper documentations of materials being shipped between Tinian and Saipan. They have been notified that part of its operation is in violation of the CPA rules and regulations," he told Saipan Tribune yesterday.

Camacho said the continuous "non-compliance" of the company will result in a more drastic action.

The executive director admitted that CPA is considering bringing the matter to court if the company fails to comply or respond to their notice.

"We have yet to receive a response from the company, which usually is given up to two weeks to answer. However, if they fail to address the concerns we raised, we may bring this matter to a higher level," he said.

Camacho declined to specify the violations. However, he cited the "concerns" as serious.

"There is no such thing as small or big violation to the rules. Once you're found non-compliant, there's a need to address the concern immediately," he explained.

Camacho disclosed that SN Five is answerable not just to CPA regulations but to the U.S. Coast Guard as well.

"The U.S. Coast Guard is aware and may be taking actions, especially since a vehicle, which is considered a hazardous cargo, was transported to Tinian on the vessel," said Camacho in a separate report to the CPA board members.

Saipan Tribune tried to reach SN Five officials but calls were not returned as of press time.

SN Five transports cargo to and from Tinian on a daily basis, depending on the cargo demand. The vessel departs before 7am each day from Tinian for its scheduled arrival of 12 noon on Saipan. The company is owned by Tinian Mayor Jose P. San Nicolas.

Non-tank vessel response plan

CPA executive director Efrain F. Camacho, in a report to the board, said the agency had submitted on Jan. 30 its non-tank vessel response plan to the U.S. Coast Guard.

The plan, which is currently being reviewed, was developed by a committee consisting of the Coastal Resources Management Office, Stevedore, and Allied Pacific Environmental, with CPA taking the lead.

Camacho said the plan may be certified by July 2009.

In interest alone, gov't owes MRC $2.1 million

'It's like one teacher per month can't be hired'

By FERDIE DE LA TORRE
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

In interest alone, the CNMI government is liable to pay businessman Anthony Pellegrino and his Marine Revitalization Corp. a total of $2.1 million.

Attorney Michael Dotts, counsel for Pellegrino and MRC, said the court's $5.65 million judgment that was issued in 2005 has been earning a $540,000 a year in interest, bringing the government's total obligation to over $7 million.

"You can think of it is like one government employee per month can't be hired because of this judgment," Dotts told *Saipan Tribune* yesterday.

"One school teacher per month is lost because the CNMI is going to spend on the interest because nobody is paying this judgment," he added.

For the third time, the Superior Court has ordered the government to pay its $5.65 million debt plus interest to Pellegrino and MRC.

Associate Judge David A. Wiseman, in a decision issued Tuesday, warned that the court will not hesitate to address the Department of Lands and Natural Resources' future noncompliance.

Asked for comment about Wiseman's ruling, Dotts said they are very pleased because the case is costing the CNMI government too much, what with the interest.

"It is actually good for everybody that this is going to get paid. I think now that it is inevitable," Dotts said.

The lawyer pointed out that Wiseman got it completely right that the government has to pay its debts.

"The government has to respect the court's decision. So I think now it is inevitable, which is very good because it is costing everybody $45,000 a month," Dotts said.

Pellegrino established MRC to build the Outer Cove Marina in the mid-90's. The goal was to turn it over to the government. Arbitrators concluded that the marina project was a viable venture at that time because Saipan has limited mooring space at the Smiling Cove.

A dispute between MRC and the government arose in 2001 after the government not only failed to bar commercial vessels from renting slip space at Smiling Cove, but also actively solicited commercial lessees.

DLNR agreed in 2005 to a judgment of the court ordering it to pay more than $5 million to MRC or Pellegrino. DLNR, however, did not comply with the order that resulted to the court's three judgments, including Tuesday's.

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Attorney at Law
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P.O. Box 503758
Saipan, MP 96950

Tel: (670) 234-7859
Fax: (670) 234-5749

Attorney for Administrator, Jeffrey R. Kaipat

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER OF THE ESTATE OF MARIA PIERE MALUS, Deceased.	))))	CIVIL ACTION NO. 99-769D

NOTICE OF HEARING ON THE PETITION FOR DECREE OF FINAL DISTRIBUTION

DATE: APRIL 20, 2009
TIME: 1:30 PM
JUDGE: NAJARA

TO: GENERAL PUBLIC, ANY CREDITORS and THE HEIRS OF:
1. SOLTEIO KAIPAT - Deceased
2. SISTO MALUS KAIPAT - Deceased
3. JOSEPHA MALUS KAIPAT - Deceased
4. CONCEPCION KAIPAT RUBEN - Deceased
5. CALISTRO MALUS KAIPAT - Deceased
6. MARIA ROFAG SABLAN - Deceased

A NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN AND YOU ARE HEREBY NOTIFIED that JEFFREY R. KAIPAT of Saipan, Mariana Islands and in his capacity as the Administrator of the foregoing **Estate of MARIA PIERE MALUS, Deceased,** has petitioned the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands for a Decree of Final Distribution in said estate. The Attorney of Record is **Robert Tenorio Torres, Esq., whose address in Plata Drive, Whispering Palms, Chalan Kiya, P.O. Box 503758, Saipan, MP 96950.**

The hearing on said Petition for a Decree of Final Distribution by Jeffrey R. Kaipat, as Administrator, has been set for a hearing on **20th of April, 2009 at the hour of 1:30 p.m.** Courtroom 202A of the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Civic Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, All interested persons or entities should appear at this hearing.

A copy of said Petition for a Decree of Final Distribution is available for review at the Office of the Clerk of Court. If you have any objection to said Petition for a Decree of Final Distribution, you are requested to notify the Clerk of Court and the **Law Office of Robert Tenorio Torres, Attorney at Law, at the address herein-above indicated.** You may also appear at the same time and date set for the hearing on the Petition for a Decree of Final Distribution to present your objection to the above-entitled Honorable Court.

SO ORDERED this 17th day of February, 2009.

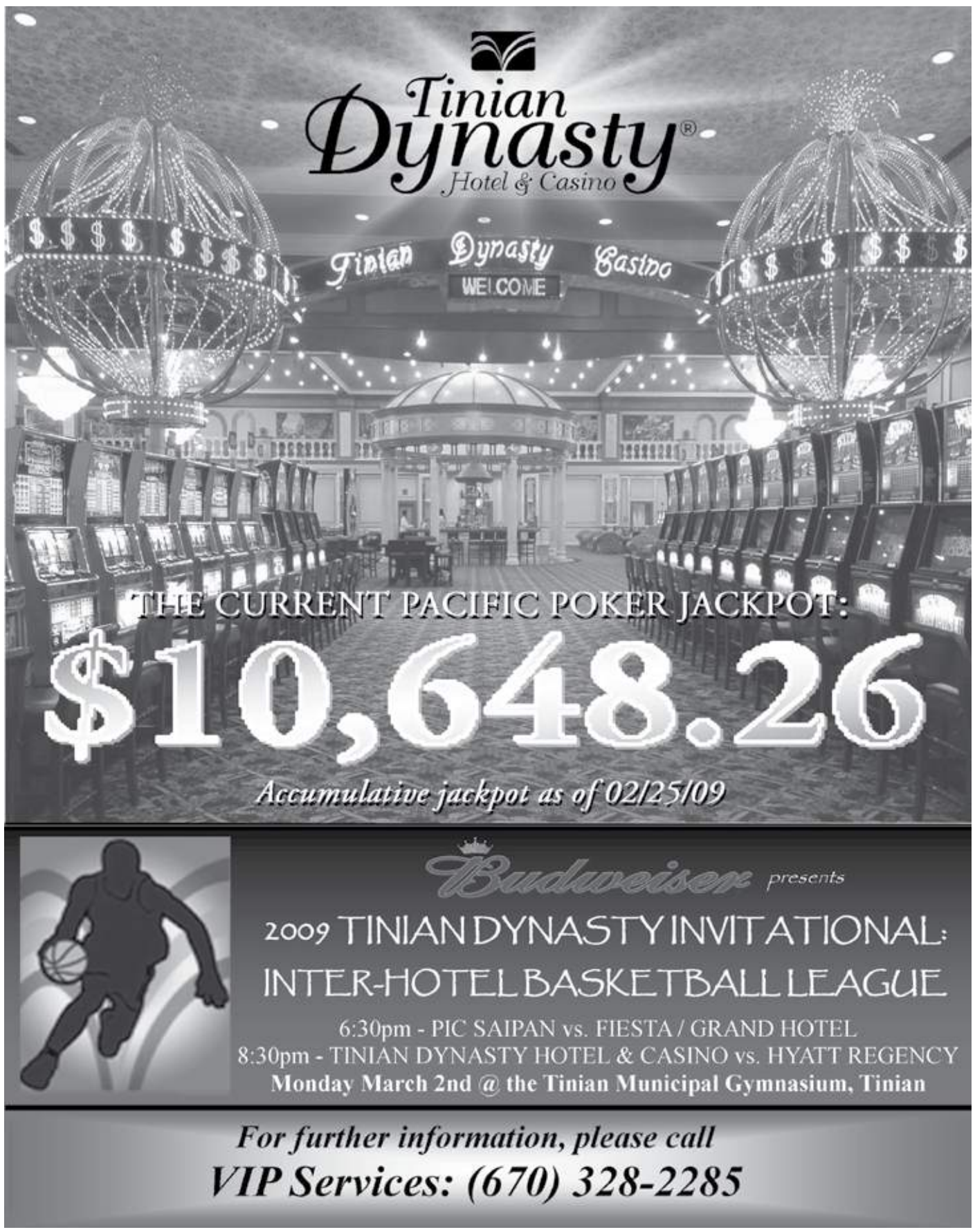
/s/ BERNADITA SABLAN
Deputy Clerk of Court

Veterans' briefing and stress management briefing

This is to let all combat veterans, their dependents and all concerned know that on Feb. 26-27, 2009, Catherine Illarmo, the Department of Veterans Affairs team leader/LCSW from the Guam Vet Center will be on Saipan to give individuals counseling to combat veterans and a stress management briefing to all interested. Anyone wishing to see Illarmo may call her at 1-671-472-7161 or Ruth Coleman at the Veterans Affairs Office at 664-2650 to make an appointment. She will also take walk-ins.

- Feb. 26, 2009, 9am-4pm, Military/ Veterans Office, Bldg 1364, Capital Hill
- Feb. 27, 2009 9am-12pm, same place
- Feb. 26, 2009, 6pm, Army Reserve Center

For more information, call Ruth Coleman at the Office of Military/ Veterans Affairs at 664-2650. ***(PR)***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8:30pm - TINIAN DYNASTY HOTEL & CASINO vs. HYATT REGENCY
Monday March 2nd @ the Tinian Municipal Gymnasium, Tinian
For further information, please call
VIP Services: (670) 328-2285

NMC seeks $9M budget for FY10

Including US apprenticeship program

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The Northern Marianas College is seeking the governor's approval for its $9 million funding request for fiscal year 2010, which includes nearly $3 million for the U.S. apprenticeship program.

In a four-page budget transmittal, NMC president Dr. Carmen Fernandez and Board of Regents chair Charles V. Cepeda indicated that the new budget submission is based on priorities established by the college, after completion of a comprehensive program review in 2008 and in accordance with the PROA Strategic Plan for 2008-2012.

"Our requested budget amount, if approved, will enable NMC to carry on activities necessary to meet the goals and priority initiatives as specified in the strategic plan. But more importantly, it will enable the college to work toward meeting the college's mission as mandated by NMI Constitution and toward maintaining reaffirmation of its accreditation by the Western Association of Schools and Colleges," the two officials said.

From the $9 million total funding request, general appropriation and vocational education program is allocated $6.074 million, which slightly exceeds the amount stipulated in Public Law 9-53.

The law guarantees not less than $6 million—or 1 percent of the general revenue of the CNMI—for the islands' lone tertiary institution.

The breakdown of the budget request calls for $5.1 million for general appropriation, of which $4.6 million is earmarked for personnel and $450,000 for "all others."

NMC is expecting to get $969,390 from Public Law 10-66, of which $960,000 is set for personnel and $9,389 for "all others."

Some $2.9 million is budgeted under the U.S. apprenticeship program stipulated in P.L. 15-5. Some $1.2 million will be for personnel while $1.8 million will go to all others.

The NMC budget proposal was approved by the Board of Regents in their Jan. 28. 2009, meeting.

Fernandez and Cepeda stated that the budget submission includes the minimum critical positions required for NMC to maintain accreditation.

"We were cited for severe lack of administrative capacity to operate a community college. We will continue to prioritize the college's programs to ensure that our operations are effective and efficient and that we maintain accreditation," they said, adding that NMC will also expand its efforts to achieve external funds, including federal grants and donations.

NMC projects $7.1M other funding

Based on the consolidated budget summary estimate submitted by NMC, a total of $7.1 million other funding is anticipated in FY 2010 by the college.

Of the figure, a total of $3.1 million is projected to come from the college's operations, tuition, and fees while $4 million will be sourced from federal and subfederal grants for NMC.

Records showed that from tuition and fees, $2.2 million is set for "all others" while $843,000 will be used to pay personnel.

Of the anticipated federal assistance, $2.3 million is set for personnel cost while $1.6 million will be utilized for operations and "all others."

NMC, with the combined $9 million request and $7.1 million projected other funding, stands to receive in FY 2010 $16.2 million in total budget if approved by the Legislature.

134 employees for FY2010

NMC officials revealed that from the $4.6 million personnel budget next fiscal year, 43 percent will pay for instructional faculty; 17 percent will pay for staff at the president's office, institutional advancement, institutional effectiveness and Tinian and Rota offices.

The student services is allocated 16 percent of the total personnel cost, 15 percent is set for financial and administrative support staff, 5 percent for academic programs and services, and 4 percent for community programs and services.

Under the budget submission, NMC identified 134 full-time employees.

NMC offers course to improve PRAXIS score

The Northern Marianas College, through the Division of Community Programs and Services' Community Development Institute, is offering short-term courses to individuals preparing to take the PRAXIS I and II examinations. The courses are offered as part of the college's mission to provide customized, continuing educational and professional development opportunities in response to community needs.

Additionally, the courses are designed to give potential test-takers an idea of what to expect on the PRAXIS I and II exams. The PRAXIS I Review will cover Pre-Professional Skills Test Math, PPST Writing, and PPST Reading; while the PRAXIS II Review will cover Literature & Language Arts, Mathematics, History & Social Studies, and Sciences. Both courses are open to all elementary teachers in the private and public school systems.

PRAXIS I Review

Instructor: Bertha De Leon Guerrero, Eric Johnson
March 21, 2009 (Saturday)
8am to 12:30pm
Room D-1(NMC Campus)
Fee: $60 (Course materials included)

PRAXIS II Review

Instructor: Bertha De Leon Guerrero
March 28, 2009 (Saturday)
8am to 12:30pm
Room D-1(NMC Campus)
Fee: $60 (Course materials included)

For a more detailed description of the course, contact CDI at 234-5498 ext. 1010 or log on to www.nmcnet.edu.

All interested individuals should register at least seven days before the day of the course. Certificates of participation will be awarded to registered students who complete all course requirements. Full payment is required for admission to a class. To register or for more information about the courses, please visit the CDI Office in Building P on the NMC Campus in As Terlaje or call John Manalo at 234-5498 ext. 1010 or e-mail johnm@nmcnet.edu. ***(NMC)***

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Main Office: SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
P.O. BOX 501055 • SAIPAN • MP 96950-1055
Phone: (670) 237-6500 Fax: (670) 234-5962
E-Mail Address: cpa.admin@pticom.com • Website: www.cpa.gov.mp

REQUEST FOR QUALIFICATION STATEMENTS FOR ARCHITECTURAL/ENGINEERING DESIGN SERVICES

SAIPAN INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT
GENERATOR BUILDING RENOVATIONS
PROJECT NO. CPA-SA-005-09

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) is soliciting statements of professional qualifications from interested firms for Architectural/Engineering (A/E) Design Services.

The general scope of work is for A/E design services for renovations and improvements to the generator building at the Saipan International Airport, Commonwealth of the Northern Marianas Islands. These improvements consist of, but are not limited to replacement of doors and door frames, facility hardware, louver motors, air-conditioning units, renovations to living quarters and roof repairs.

At a minimum, the statements of professional qualification from firms should address the areas generally described below:

1. Overall A/E design experience in the Pacific area and especially in the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands;
2. A/E Design experience related to CPA projects;
3. Level of proficiency in performing A/E services promptly; and level of experience;
4. The general reputation of the firm in terms of quality of A/E work experience and services performed for AIP projects, and the firm's professional integrity and competence; and
5. Resumes of key personnel including current licenses and registrations of principal, if applicable.

Interested firms must submit one (1) original and four (4) copies each of their statements of professional qualifications no later than **4:30 p.m., Tuesday, March 10, 2009.**

Statements of qualification must be presented by a combination of both brochures and the use of current U.S. Government Standard Form 330. Only firms who have established an office in the Commonwealth and a valid business license will be considered.

The CPA reserves the right to reject any or all statements of professional qualification for any reason, if in its sole opinion to do so would be in its best interest.

Send information to:
Mr. Efrain F. Camacho, PE
Executive Director/Contracting Officer
Commonwealth Ports Authority
P.O. Box 501055
Saipan, MP 96950-1055

/s/ MR. EFRAIN F. CAMACHO
Executive Director/Contracting Officer

Date: February 24, 2009

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

February 26, 1999

PR firm hiring backed

The Saipan Chamber of Commerce yesterday asked Gov. Pedro P. Tenorio to look for the needed funds so that the CNMI government can engage the services of a public relations firm. To resolve the issue, David A. Wiseman, chairman of the government relations committee, asked the governor to meet with members of the Chamber so that they can both discuss possible ways on how to raise the money. While US Rep. Don Young (R-Alaska) has indicated his support to the CNMI in blocking efforts of Washington to federalize labor and immigration, the Chamber said it is still important to hire a public relations firm to counter the negative attacks against the Northern Marianas by promoting its positive image.

Hawaiian Airlines may fly to Saipan

The Aviation Task Force is eyeing to tap Hawaiian Airlines to provide service in the Northern Marianas but such plan would depend on whether or not the Commonwealth Ports Authority would grant a 50 percent reduction in airport fees and charges as an incentive to new carriers. Aside from providing inter-island service in Hawaii, it also flies to the US West Coast. It was able to obtain a license from the US Department of Transportation to fly between Saipan and Fukuoka but later on sold it to Northwest Airlines in late '80s. According to JM Guerrero, head of the task force, the Northern Marianas must take advantage of the opportunity to convince Hawaiian Airlines to service the CNMI since it has already obtained the route to fly to Japan in the year 2000.

February 26, 2001

CUC faces House scrutiny

The continued bickering on utility debts and excessive travel tabs incurred by officials of the Commonwealth Utilities Corporation are likely to cause more uproar as the Legislature prepares for an in-depth investigation next week. The lower chamber of the CNMI Legislature has been summoning courage to stay focus on the issue despite CUC's persistent refusal to provide the House of Representatives the requested financial status. Committee on Public Utilities, Transportation and Communication chair Rep. Rosiky F. Camacho disclosed Friday that a committee meeting scheduled on March 8 for the CUC and the Commonwealth Development Authority has been set to discuss the partnership agreement entered into by the CNMI government and the Office of Insular Affairs.

Port improvements fail to seduce direct flights

Despite ongoing major runway improvements, Rota may still have to wait until it becomes economically viable for Continental Micronesia to resume its air service to the island. Bill Meehan, Continental Micronesia President, told the sad news during the Marianas Visitors Authority (MVA) General Membership Meeting at the Hyatt last Friday, were he was the keynote speaker. "We cannot fly an empty aircraft just to honor a commitment," Mr. Meehan said. "The commitment has always been there and we intend to honor it, but there has to be a demand. We need to be a successful airline first to be an airline at all."

February 26, 2002

Tourism loss may reach $152-M

The CNMI economy could fail to tap some $162 million in additional revenue from the tourism sector if strategies to revive the tourism industry do not push through this year. This grim scenario presented by key players in the tourism industry during a strategic planning meeting held Thursday will only be erased if all efforts are refocused toward the number one travel market for the CNMI-Japan. Based on data presented by the tourism industry players, the CNMI will generate an additional $162 million from the tourism industry alone if all efforts are exhausted in 2002 to bring in an additional 100,000 Japanese tourists, beyond the present number of arrivals from Japan.

Shooting suspects plead not guilty

All seven defendants in the Jan. 27 Talofofo target practice shooting incident that killed a seven-year-old girl pleaded not guilty during their arraignment before the Superior Court yesterday. The defendants, including Anthony T. Benavente, who was leveled with involuntary manslaughter and aggravated assault and battery charges, entered their not-guilty pleas with the aid of their lawyer, Brian Nicolas The court has set the case for a status conference on June 9, 2002, at 9am, to be presided by Associate Judge David A. Wiseman.

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Opinion

Hafa Adai!
Saipan Tribune
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MEMBER
The Associated Press Pacific Islands News Association

ITEM: "SLUMDOG MILLIONAIRE" LEADS TO TOURISM BOOM IN MUMBAI
COME ON AND DO SOMETHING CUTE.
KIRK
©2009 The Toledo Blade - email: kirk@theblade.com

EDITORIAL

Clinton's winning road trip

In her first official trip overseas, Hillary Rodham Clinton showed herself to be a different kind of secretary of State for a different time. She broke with almost half a century of tradition in choosing Asia rather than Europe or the Middle East for her initial voyage, going to countries not only where American prestige is largely intact but whose help with the global economic crisis is, as she put it, "indispensable." Throughout her tour of Japan, Indonesia, South Korea and China, it might be said that Clinton aggressively projected a nonconfrontational foreign policy—and rightly so.

Human rights activists were understandably worried when Clinton decided to soft-pedal concerns with the government of China over Tibet, the jailing of dissidents and other violations of civil liberties. She went too far in saying that human rights "can't interfere with the global economic crisis, the global climate change crisis and the security crisis." There is real cause for concern about China's human rights record, and who will press the Asian giant if not the United States? Unfortunately, the decision reflects political and economic realities of the moment. It is difficult for the United States to deliver lectures on human rights in the wake of waterboarding. What was Clinton to say: Release your prisoners next year, just as soon as we close Guantanamo and figure out what to do with ours?

Furthermore, the United States isn't in a position right now to extol the virtues of American capitalism. Clinton could hardly urge less state intervention in the economy and currency exchange liberalization when the U.S. financial system has seized up and the government is practically nationalizing banks. And especially not when asking China to keep buying U.S. debt on top of the more than $600 billion it already owns.

So what did she do? Clinton used President Obama's popularity and the force of her personality to try to restore America's standing abroad. She opted for direct talk over the usual diplomatic caution in highlighting international concern about leadership changes in North Korea. She spoke with women in Japan about balancing career and family, and working with men. She honored a democratic transfer of power in Indonesia, the world's largest Muslim country.

Rather than lecturing China about greenhouse gas emissions, Clinton urged the government not to make the mistakes the United States and Europe had made, effectively taking partial responsibility for the problem. She said that lecturing China has never been productive and that it was time to give the country some of the respect due the world's third-largest economy. It was a successful first foray by the secretary of State. She'll have other opportunities to use the moral and political force of a superpower—once this country has regained its standing—to address human rights abuses in China.

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Esprit de corps

"Morale is the capacity of a group of people to pull together persistently and consistently in pursuit of a common purpose."
—Alexander Leighton

By RIK and JANEL VILLEGAS

Rik is a business instructor at NMC and Janel is a partner with BizResults, LLC (www.bizresults.org). They can be contacted at biz_results@yahoo.com.

As a military officer, I learned that leadership is enhanced when morale is high and individuals work as a team. The physical and emotional demands placed on soldiers during battle can test the bravest souls to the extreme; however, greater strength and purpose is achieved when individuals act as a unified body.

Esprit de corps (pronounced: es PREE deh core) is a French word that translates as group spirit, and it is usually synonymous with the morale of a group and comradeship. It is the common spirit that exists in a group and that inspires enthusiasm, devotion, and a strong regard for honor among its members. When it exists, the group has a sense of purpose, direction and a feeling of invincibility. If it does not exist, disorganization, infighting, and power struggles prevail.

During war, one of the main objectives is to destroy the morale of the enemy because it reduces their will to resist. If the will to fight is taken away, it is relatively easy to subdue and conquer a group. Even though the CNMI is not at war, we are in a battle that is testing our capacity to work together for the greater good. Fear and factionalism is destroying the community from the inside out. Unless it is turned around, it will destroy the "spirit of the body" and act as a community cancer that will weaken the overall body and eventually cause its collapse.

During wartime, morale is high if a regiment:

- Clearly understands the objectives;
- Values the objectives and feels they are worthwhile to pursue;
- Believes that the objectives can be achieved; and
- Fears the consequences if the battle is lost.

These same elements are also essential in an organization to maintain *esprit de corps* so that the company can move confidently forward to achieve its goals and objectives. Henri Fayol, an early French management scholar outlined 14 principles that are essential to manage well. *Esprit de corps* was the last, but not least principle. Fayol suggested that: "*real talent* is needed to coordinate effort, encourage keenness, use each person's abilities, and reward each one's merit without arousing possible jealousies and disturbing harmonious relations."

Therein lies the crux. Real talent appears to be an anomaly in most organizations, but it is necessary to create an environment where a harmonious and purposeful group spirit is fostered. It can be experienced and felt in the best-run companies, yet it is elusive to capture and imbue that same spirit into the body of another organization without the proper leadership. Too often, the very people who need to "make it happen" undermine *esprit de corps*, and therefore foster the disintegration of the organization. Here are a just a few factors that can negatively impact morale in a body of people:

- The management style of its leaders;
- Lack of job security;
- Inability for team members to freely communicate concerns and express opinions;
- Nepotism and unfair hiring and promotion practices;
- Feelings that an individual's contribution is not valued; and
- Lack of integrity and duplicity, as demonstrated by top management.

It will take the right kind of leadership to inspire and instill *esprit de corps* into the general body of an organization and the community if we want to survive. That leadership will come, not just from political aspirants, but also from ordinary individuals who want to make a difference. If enough people are energized to make that difference, then that energy will transfer to others until the air is charged with excitement and hope.

This is a watershed year for the people of the CNMI. It is absolutely essential for the real talent that exists here to step forward and run for political office, take charge of their organizations, and foster community support to create the *esprit de corps* that will bring about the changes we desperately need to jumpstart the economy and start moving us in the right direction. Anything else will only perpetuate the chaotic crisis and raucous rhetoric that has become the insufferable status quo in the Commonwealth.

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Obama and The Press: The story so far

Special to The Washington Post

SID DAVIS

Former vice president and Washington bureau chief of NBC News; House correspondent for Westinghouse Broadcasting Co.

If President Obama is going to keep his promise of transparency, he should make a few changes before his next news conference. The somber mood last time was not only about the dismal economic news. The format of selecting in advance reporters who would be called on meant that there was no shouting or bobbing up and down for attention. This system favors the networks and other heavy hitters over smaller news outfits or specialty writers, and it inhibits follow-up questioning.

Obama officials reportedly informed journalists in advance who would be called on. Little wonder, then, that the news conference was devoid of excitement. Everyone else who was there served merely as props. Only a handful were allowed to stand and speak. What would happen to a maverick who dared to shout a question? Would he be tackled by the Secret Service?

The Bush administration practice of each reporter saying "Thank you, Mr. President," before even asking a question was also maintained. In the olden days, there was only one "Thank you, Mr. President" per news conference, shouted by the senior wire service reporter, and it formally ended the session.

Some past presidents required reporters to submit written questions in advance so that the president would appear sharp. But news conferences were not always stilted affairs. Ronald Reagan held more than 40 noisy, live prime-time news conferences. And legend has it that Franklin D. Roosevelt kept a dunce cap under his desk for presentation to the asker of the dumbest question.

If Obama really favors transparency, a little free-for-all among the media should fit his style. Enough of the noiseless news conferences. Democracy is noisy.

ARI FLEISCHER

White House press secretary from January 2001 to July 2003

If President Obama wants to see the White House press corps hoist themselves on their own petards, he should grant them their wish. Instead of using a list to call on reporters at his next news conference, he should let them shout.

When trust in the media is dropping along with the number of people who read newspapers and watch the news, the last thing journalists should do is act like fools on national TV, seeing who has the loudest voice—or the reddest dress—with their hands raised, yelling "me, me, me, me."

As White House press secretary, I typically gave President Bush a call list and a grid showing him where reporters would be seated. For the president, it makes things easier and more orderly. Bush's answers usually weren't very long, so he often called on a lot more reporters than I suggested.

The media resist being "controlled." But in the YouTube age, the media will make themselves look bad if left to their own devices. President Obama should do himself, and the media, a favor and keep working from a list.

HELEN THOMAS

Columnist for Hearst newspapers; reporter for UPI for 57 years

As a White House correspondent for UPI for many years, I rotated with my Associated Press competitor for the first two questions at presidential news conferences, and I considered myself lucky for not having to shout for attention. Now I am not sure I will be called on, and that is frustrating.

Every reporter hopes for the privilege of asking the president a question. None of us wants to be a prop. We also want to be permitted follow-ups, and it is wrong for a president to deny them, especially when he makes a faulty statement. Reporters contribute more if they are on their toes.

I preferred the days when we had pandemonium and were not quietly hoping to pose a question to the world's most powerful person. Presidents should be questioned early and often. You can't have a democracy otherwise.

SAM DONALDSON

Co-host of ABC News's "Politics Live"

I'm told that when President Obama meets journalists, the lucky reporters are often told in advance that they will have the chance to ask a question. Is the message to "think carefully about what you ask," or, as Goldfinger put it to Agent 007 when he lay strapped to the laser table, "Choose your next witticism carefully, Mr. Bond, it may be your last"?

The White House reporters I see today are professional; they know their job is to try to find out what a president is doing or intends to do for the public and to get his answers to his critics' complaints. Those reporters know they are not there to either build up or tear down a president (by his actions and policies he will do that) or to win a popularity contest. The questions they ask must never be rude but must always be challenging. I know some people thought I was sometimes too aggressive in my questioning, but I always knew which one of us was the president of the United States and which one wasn't.

Every president tries to "handle the press." At the end of the day he'll only do that as well as he handles his job. When people tell me how brilliantly President Obama and his people are handling the press, I just smile. Wait awhile.

Letters to the Editor

Climate of fear

It is with sadness that I read of the continuing problems at NMC. As a former member of the Faculty Senate and an instructor at both the Tinian and Saipan campuses, I can attest to the veracity of both Sen. Maria Pangelinan and Rep. Heinz Hofeschneider when they raise the issue of NMC's possible (probable) loss of accreditation due to poor management by President Fernandez. I saw a pervasive climate of fear spread through the faculty as President Fernandez used her power in retaliation against any who dared disagree with her. Yes, faculty and staff were afraid of losing their jobs. As Faculty Senate Rep. I heard many such complaints, but always with the caveat of anonymity. Fear was pervasive, and had a stifling effect on educational innovation, creativity and overall excellence. I made the wrenching decision to leave last August, as I could no longer stand to watch the College I had come to love being destroyed by President Fernandez. I gave up a year of "double dipping" and financial security because I was sick at heart. I miss my CJ students terribly and feel guilty about leaving them, but I really could not stay and work under that president. Please, Frica and Heinz and others who love NMC, get rid of this woman before it is too late and NMC loses WASC accreditation. The students and the CNMI deserve better.

Lynda Rowe
Portland, Oregon

Thanks to Shirley's

This is a letter of thanks to Shirley's Coffee Shop for sponsoring the Independents Futbol Club. Last year the youth football league started football clubs in order to better organize the league and to qualify as members of the Asian Football Confederation (AFC). There were four clubs formed in March last year. The IFC was one of those clubs and Shirley's Coffee Shop was the IFC's sponsor. Because of Shirley's kind donation, it made it possible for 94 kids from the Koblerville and San Antonio areas to play football. What their sponsorship paid for was registration fees to play in the spring and fall leagues, shin guards, soccer balls, jerseys, water, paint to line the field, and a couple of barbecues for the kids. From all the volunteers and all the kids from the Independents Futbol Club, wed like to say thank you! Your generosity has been greatly appreciated. Si yuus maase from all the volunteers and kids of the Independents Futbol Club.

Glenn Smith
President
Independents Futbol Club

Conspicuous thrift

By CHRIS AYRES
Special to the Los Angeles Times

Ayres is Los Angeles correspondent for The Times *of London and the author, most recently, of* Death by Leisure: A Cautionary Tale.

It's no fun being rich when everyone else is poor. Who, for example, would be willing to show up to a dinner party in a brand-new lime-green Lamborghini, in the almost certain knowledge that some of the other guests would be among the growing ranks of the recently unemployed? Sorry about the medical insurance, Katy. Terrible news on the foreclosure, Bob. Too bad on the 401(k), Fred. Hey, check out my titanium wheel nuts!

This isn't a new problem. Pretty much every downturn in history has created the same delicate circumstances for the few who remain usefully liquid. Making things even more tricky is the fact that a recession is a great opportunity to splurge—you just get so much more for your Benjamins. Now, for example, would be the perfect time to buy Iceland and turn it into a summer house. But whom could you tell? And whom would you invite? These days, even the queen of England is eating Spam for dinner and worrying about her rollover cell phone minutes.

I'm not asking anyone to feel bad for those with Kevlar-plated bank balances. But if they stop spending money out of good manners, then we're all in even bigger trouble than we thought. This much is clear from John Maynard Keynes' "paradox of thrift," which posits that if everyone saves, everyone gets poorer. Translation: Chicken McNuggets, bad; diamond-encrusted cupcakes, good. Without spending, we all go bust.

So what are we to do?

Clearly, we need to make the rich feel good about consuming again. Quite a challenge, in an era when an honest Wall Street banker such as Merrill Lynch's former chief, John Thain, can't even buy a $35,000 claw-footed faux antique "commode" without getting ridiculed by the media.

But don't panic! There is a solution, and it can be found in the unlikely form of Bertolt Brecht, the Depression-era German poet, playwright and theater director (and thief, woman-hater and hypocrite, if you believe some of his biographers). After creating the hugely successful 1928 pro-Marxist musical "The Threepenny Opera," Brecht found himself in the sensitive position of being an extraordinarily wealthy anti-capitalist capitalist. Like the rich of today, he had money, but he simply couldn't spend it (You can't buy that, dear. What would the proletariat say?). So instead, he set about using his wealth to amass things that would make him appear broke. The most infamous example: a bespoke leather trench coat, constructed with great care (and at terrific expense) to feature perfectly crooked seams and a perfectly bent collar.

Some might call this good old-fashioned liberal hypocrisy. I prefer another term: "conspicuous thrift." Moreover, to misquote Gordon Gekko, from the movie "Wall Street," I believe that conspicuous thrift might not only save this city of ours but also that other malfunctioning entity, the U.S.A.

Take the hypothetical Lamborghini shopper at the top of this article. He could have solved his dinner party problem by simply walking into a Lexus dealership, where a salesman would have cheerfully relieved him of $105,000 for a state-of-the-art hybrid sedan with worse gas mileage than an $11,000 Kia. After all, you could hardly feel bad about boasting to your friends that you're saving money on gas (not to mention saving the human race). It's practically a gesture of solidarity.

There are plenty of other ways to flaunt your parsimony. At this year's post-Oscar Vanity Fair party, starlets in half-a-million-dollar frocks (as opposed to the usual million-dollar ones) will clutch gold statues while surrounded by decor ostentatiously recycled from previous years. What kind of sourpuss could begrudge anyone a champagne-soaked Oscar party when there's recycling involved?

Yet by far the most economically stimulative kind of conspicuous thrift involves a breathtakingly vast capital outlay in return for an entirely inconsequential—yet pricelessly boast-worthy—cost-saving. Take the episode of "House Hunters International" that aired on the HGTV channel recently. It featured a British family that had rebuilt their home underground so they could save on energy. Now that's the spirit: Knock down your property, drop a six-figure sum on architects, engineers, steel-reinforced retaining walls and a glass roof; redecorate the place; then brag about the $200 a month you save on utility bills.

So there you have it: a way out of this appalling crisis—and one that is refreshingly reminiscent of the highly enjoyable yet ultimately catastrophic bubble that got us here in the first place. Not that most of us can afford any of this thrift, mind you. But mark my words, the second I get some cash, I'm off to buy some hens, hire a farmer, take out a mortgage on a ranch and congratulate myself on how cheap I get my eggs.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY
Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers. East winds 15 to 25 mph.	Partly cloudy and breezy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲87° ▼76°	▲87° ▼76°	▲87° ▼76°	▲87° ▼76°	▲86° ▼76°

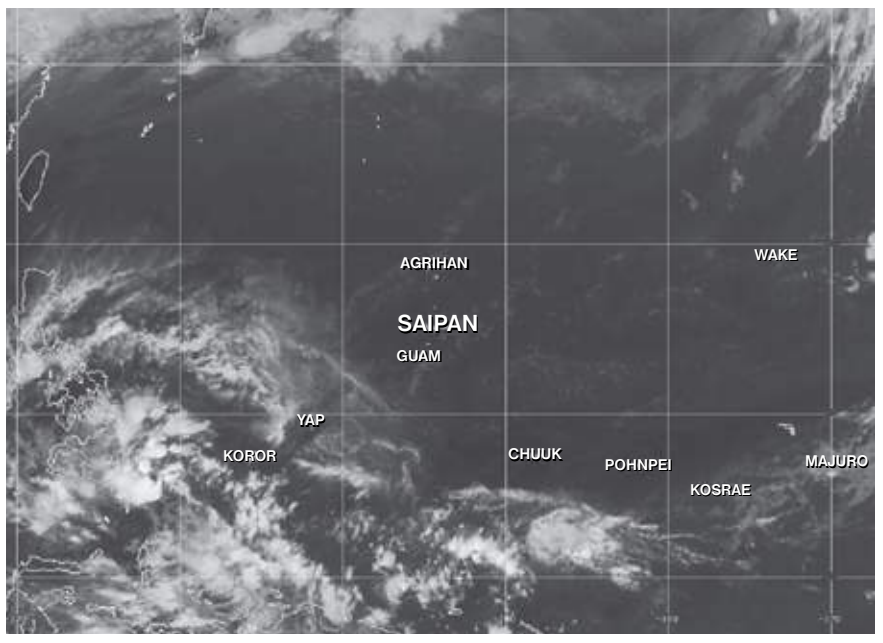
Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Partly Sunny	▲83	▼75
Palau	Mostly Sunny	▲88	▼78
Yap	Windy	▲88	▼77
Chuuk	Showers	▲88	▼80
Pohnpei	Mostly Cloudy	▲86	▼75
Kosrae	Mostly Sunny	▲89	▼77
Majuro	Rain	▲81	▼78

Around The Globe

Auckland	Mostly Cloudy	▲73	▼60
Beijing	Mostly Sunny	▲46	▼28
Hong Kong	Mostly Sunny	▲81	▼72
Honolulu	Showers	▲72	▼64
London	Cloudy	▲51	▼40
Los Angeles	Partly Sunny	▲66	▼52
Manila	Showers	▲86	▼75
Melbourne	Mostly Sunny	▲84	▼62
Miami	Mostly Sunny	▲77	▼64
New York	Mostly Cloudy	▲47	▼39
Osaka	Cloudy	▲46	▼45
Paris	Mostly Cloudy	▲49	▼39
Pusan	Showers	▲52	▼45
Rome	Sunny	▲53	▼37
Salem	Rain	▲48	▼33
San Francisco	Rain	▲60	▼48
Seoul	Cloudy	▲45	▼30
Tokyo	Cloudy	▲50	▼39
Washington, DC	Mostly Cloudy	▲57	▼44

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, WEDNESDAY, FEB. 25, 2009
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A near-equatorial trough extends from a weak circulation near 3N130E. Convergent low-level winds are generating scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms south of a line from 10N130E to EQ140E. These showers are south of Koror, Palau and Yap. Trade-wind convergence is producing two areas of scattered showers and a few thunderstorms. The first is south of Chuuk and Pohnpei between the equator and 5N from 141E to 158E. The second is east of Majuro between 5N and 15N from 171E to 180. An upper-level low centered east of Wake Island near 19N172E is triggering scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms east of a line from 15N176E to 19N172E to 25N175E.

Tides

Saipan Harbor

2:01 AM Today	Low Tide:	0.0 Feet
8:29 AM Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet
2:24 PM Today	Low Tide:	0.8 Feet
7:47 PM Today	High Tide:	1.9 Feet

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:36 AM	6:24 PM
Friday	6:36 AM	6:24 PM
Saturday	6:35 AM	6:24 PM
Sunday	6:34 AM	6:25 PM
Monday	6:34 AM	6:25 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	7:03 AM	7:22 PM
Friday	7:40 AM	8:13 PM
Saturday	8:18 AM	9:06 PM
Sunday	8:59 AM	10:02 PM
Monday	9:44 AM	11:01 PM

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  Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
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  Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

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- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
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- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

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  To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

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- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

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- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 1, 2009

DEPARTURES

Saipan-Rota			
CO9597	11:50am	12:25pm	1,7
Saipan-Guam			
CO9317	5:00am	5:50am	Daily
CO9313	8:30am	9:20am	Daily
CO9597	11:50am	1:20pm	1,7 via Rota
CO9601	12:30pm	1:20pm	2,3,4,5,6
CO9603	3:30pm	4:20pm	Daily
CO9605	6:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
CO9599	9:30pm	10:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Narita			
NW 099	5:00am	7:35am	Daily
NW 078	8:20am	1:30pm	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 075	4:55pm	7:30pm	Daily
Guam-Narita			
NW 73	4:10pm	7:00pm	Daily
NW 81	3:55pm	6:55pm	Daily
Saipan-Osaka			
OZ 119	4:00am	6:40am	1,4,6
NW 083	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Guam-Osaka			
NW 79	4:45pm	7:35pm	Daily
Saipan-Nagoya			
NW 078	8:20am	11:05am	Daily
Guam-Nagoya			
NW 23	4:30pm	7:20pm	Daily
Saipan-Incheon			
OZ 604	2:10am	6:00am	1
OZ 604	2:40am	6:30am	2,3,4,5,6,7
OZ 119	4:00am	11:25am	1,4,6 via Osaka
OZ 606	3:20pm	7:00pm	Daily
Saipan-Busan			
OZ 608	3:20am	6:50am	1,4,5,7
Saipan-Shanghai			
FM 844	2:50am	5:40am	2,6
Rota-Guam			
CO 9597	12:50pm	1:20pm	1,7
Guam-Palau			
CO 953	7:40pm	8:40pm	1,7
CO 893	5:50pm	6:50pm	3,5
Palau-Manila			
CO 893	7:35pm	9:10pm	3,5
Guam-Manila			
CO 893	5:50pm	9:10pm	3,5 via Koror
CO 933	8:00pm	9:40pm	Daily
PR 111	6:00am	7:50am	1,2,4,6,7
Nagoya-Manila			
NW 71	8:40pm	11:55pm	Daily
Incheon-Hongkong			
OZ 721	9:20am	12:00pm	Daily
OZ 723	7:45pm	10:35pm	Daily
OZ 7173	8:00pm	10:50pm	5,7
Narita-Manila			
NW 1	7:00pm	10:55pm	Daily

ARRIVALS

Rota-Saipan			
CO 9598	3:25am	4:00am	5,6
Guam-Saipan			
CO 9316	2:30am	3:20am	1,2,3,4,7
CO9598	2:30am	4:00am	5,6 via Rota
CO9596	7:00am	7:50am	Daily
CO9600	10:20am	11:10am	Daily
CO9602	2:00pm	2:50pm	Daily
CO9604	5:00pm	5:50pm	Daily
CO9606	8:00pm	8:50pm	Daily
Narita-Saipan			
NW 076	10:15am	2:40pm	Daily
NW 077	6:25pm	1:20am+1	2,3,4,5,6,7
NW 100	8:45pm	1:10am+1	Daily
Narita-Guam			
NW 74	9:45am	2:20pm	Daily
NW 82	10:30am	3:10pm	Daily
Osaka-Saipan			
OZ 120	9:50pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7
NW 084	10:40am	3:05pm	Daily
Osaka-Guam			
NW 80	10:30am	3:00pm	Daily
Nagoya-Saipan			
NW 077	9:00pm	1:20am+1	Daily
Nagoya-Guam			
NW 24	10:00am	2:30pm	Daily
Incheon-Saipan			
OZ 605	9:00am	2:20pm	Daily
OZ 603	7:40pm	1:00am+1	7
OZ 120	7:10pm	2:20am+1	3,5,7 via Osaka
OZ 603	8:10pm	1:30am+1	1,2,3,4,5,6
Busan-Saipan			
OZ 607	9:00pm	2:10am+1	3,4,6,7
Shanghai-Saipan			
FM 843	7:15pm	1:50am+1	1,5
Guam-Rota			
CO 9598	2:30am	3:00am	5,6
Palau-Guam			
CO 954	2:30am	5:25am	1,2
CO 892	2:35am	5:30am	4,6
Manila-Palau			
CO 892	10:10pm	1:50am+1	3,5
Manila-Guam			
CO 892	10:10pm	5:30am+1	3,5 via Koror
CO 934	11:10pm	4:40am+1	Daily
PR 110	10:10pm	4:00am+1	1,3,5,6,7
Manila-Nagoya			
NW 72	6:30am	11:05am	Daily
Hongkong-Incheon			
OZ 724	12:30am	4:50am	Daily
OZ 7183	12:45am	5:05am	1,4,6
OZ 722	1:30pm	5:45pm	Daily
Manila-Narita			
NW 2	7:45am	12:40pm	Daily

Editor's Note: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); CO: Continental; FM: Shanghai Airlines; PR: Philippine Airlines; NW: Northwest; OZ: Asiana
ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The Saipan Tribune is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota			
FRE 100	7:00am	7:30am	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 100	7:50am	8:20am	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 200	9:00am	9:30am	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 200	9:50am	10:15am	Daily
Guam-Rota			
FRE 300	4:00pm	4:30pm	Daily
Rota-Saipan			
FRE 300	4:50pm	5:25pm	Daily
Saipan-Rota			
FRE 400	6:00pm	6:30pm	Daily
Rota-Guam			
FRE 400	6:45pm	7:15pm	Daily
Saipan-Tinian			
FRE 101	6:45am	6:55am	Daily
FRE 103	7:30am	7:40am	Daily
FRE 105	8:00am	8:10am	Daily
FRE 107	8:40am	8:50am	Daily
FRE 109*	9:10am	9:20am	Daily
FRE 111*	10:45am	10:55am	Daily

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
FRE 113	11:40am	11:50am	Daily
FRE 115	1:00pm	1:10pm	Daily
FRE 117	2:30pm	2:40pm	Daily
FRE 119	4:00pm	4:10pm	Daily
FRE 121	4:40pm	4:50pm	Daily
FRE 123 *	5:40pm	5:50pm	Daily
FRE 125 *	6:00pm	6:10pm	Daily
Tinian-Saipan w/ connecting flights to Rota or Guam**			
FRE 102	7:05am	7:15am	Daily
FRE 104	7:50am	8:00am	Daily
FRE 106**	8:20am	8:30am	Daily
FRE 108**	9:00am	9:10am	Daily
FRE 110	10:00am	10:10am	Daily
FRE 112	11:05am	11:15am	Daily
FRE 114	12:00pm	12:10pm	Daily
FRE 116	1:30pm	1:40pm	Daily
FRE 118	2:50pm	3:00pm	Daily
FRE 120**	4:20pm	4:30pm	Daily
FRE 122**	5:00pm	5:10pm	Daily
FRE 124	6:05pm	6:15pm	Daily
FRE 126	6:20pm	6:30pm	Daily

Business

Wall Street points lower after Obama speech

NEW YORK (AP)—U.S. futures pointed lower after President Barack Obama's address to Congress Tuesday evening, as investors didn't get the specifics they hoped for on the government's plan to rescue troubled banks.

Earlier in the day markets rallied after Federal Reserve Chairman Ben Bernanke gave Wall Street a double dose of reassurance. He told Congress Tuesday the recession might end this year, and that regulators aren't planning to nationalize banks. The news alleviated some of investors' worries about the economy and the banking industry, and lifted the Dow Jones industrial average and Standard & Poor's 500 index off their lowest levels since 1997.

Anticipating that Obama would provide specifics about his plans to stabilize the financial system and further stimulate the economy, investors drove beaten-down financial shares up sharply.

But the details the market desperately seeks weren't unveiled Tuesday night. Speaking broadly to an ebullient crowd, the president said more money would be needed to rescue troubled banks beyond the $700 billion already committed last year.

AP

Specialist Glenn Carel works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange Tuesday, Feb. 24, 2009.

Saying that while he understands bank bailouts are unpopular, he also insisted it was the only way to get credit moving again to households and businesses. He also called on Congress to move quickly on legislation to overhaul regulations on the nation's financial markets.

Stocks remain on shaky ground, however. Bernanke's comments may have helped stem the market's slide Tuesday, but the market also found stability from temporary technical factors: bargain-hunting, the unwinding of short bets, and selling exhaustion after six straight down days for the S&P 500.

And though it appears the government is trying to quash the notion of bank nationalization, the Obama administration still has not demonstrated how exactly it will repair the banking system. The nation's financial system remains "zombie-like," said Nick Kalivas, vice president of financial research at the brokerage MF Global.

"We had an up day today, but nothing has really changed on that front," Kalivas said earlier Tuesday, predicting that the market will move lower Wednesday if specifics weren't articulated in Obama's speech.

Big banks get ready for White House stress tests

WASHINGTON (AP)—The Obama administration is getting ready to conduct "stress tests" on the nation's biggest banks to judge whether they can hold up if the recession were to worsen.

Banking regulators plan to scrutinize the financial conditions of Citigroup Inc., Bank of America Corp. and more than a dozen other institutions that have received billions from the Treasury Department's $700 billion bailout pot.

The tests, expected to start on Wednesday, will help regulators decide whether the banks have sufficient capital—and the right mix of it—to withstand any additional shocks to the economy over the next two years.

The tests also will help regulators decide whether the banks may need additional assistance so that they can carry out the critical mission of boosting lending to customers, a key ingredient to the economic turnaround.

Penny stocks? Small change for big-name companies

What costs more—a spark plug or a share of General Motors? A Sunday New York Times or a share of the newspaper company? A General Electric toaster or a share of GE?

In the surest sign of the depth of the recession, the products associated with these high-profile companies now cost more than buying a piece of the business.

Shares of some of the most renowned companies have come under assault as the worst recession in decades saps investor confidence and drags major stock indexes to their lowest levels since 1997. Despite Tuesday's 3 percent gain, the Dow Jones industrial average is still off almost 50 percent from its 2007 high—and there's little evidence it's hit bottom.

"This is a time for the history books," said Jim Coons of Coons Advisors, a financial consultant.

When the housing bubble began to burst, share prices began to cascade first in the homebuilding industry, but it spread quickly to almost every sector of the economy. ***(AP)***

BUSINESS BRIEFS

Top Ford execs take pay cuts, more buyouts offered

DETROIT (AP)—Hourly workers at Ford Motor Co. will get yet another round of buyout and early retirement offers, and the company's top two executives will take 30 percent pay cuts as Ford tries to find a way out of the worst auto sales slump in 26 years. Chief Executive Alan Mulally and Executive Chairman Bill Ford Jr. will see the salary reductions this year and next, according to a memo obtained by The Associated Press. In addition, local union leaders were told Tuesday that the company will make buyout or early retirement offers to all 42,000 U.S. hourly workers. The offers are part of a series of contract concessions in a tentative agreement reached between the United Auto Workers and the company, according to two union officials briefed on the deal.

Troubled San Francisco paper in danger of closing

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—The San Francisco Chronicle joined the lengthening list of imperiled newspapers Tuesday as its owner set out to purge the payroll and slash other expenses in a last-ditch effort to reverse years of heavy losses. If it can't reduce expenses dramatically within the next few weeks, the Hearst Corp. said it will close or sell the Chronicle, northern California's largest newspaper with a paid weekday circulation of 339,430. Hearst didn't specify a savings target or a deadline for wringing out the expenses. A Hearst spokesman didn't immediately respond to messages Tuesday. But management made it clear that the cost-cutting will require a significant number of layoffs. "Our current situation dictates that we accomplish these cost savings quickly," Chronicle Publisher Frank Vega wrote in a memo to the staff. "Business as usual is no longer an option."

Philly news execs skip raises in bankruptcy case

PHILADELPHIA (AP)—The chief executive of Philadelphia's two largest daily newspapers pledged Tuesday to roll back a recent $232,000 raise while his company tries to reorganize in bankruptcy court, but lenders questioned whether he should run the debt-heavy business. Philadelphia Newspapers LLC, which publishes The Philadelphia Inquirer and Philadelphia Daily News, filed for Chapter 11 bankruptcy protection on Sunday, 2 1/2 years after a group of local investors bought the company for more than $500 million. Chief Executive Brian Tierney and other executives have insisted the company, while strangled by debt payments, remains profitable despite falling circulation and revenues. But some lenders balked at that analysis at Tuesday's initial hearing on the bankruptcy petition and questioned decisions being made by Tierney, a former public relations executive.

Nation

Obama vows to lead US from dire 'day of reckoning'

WASHINGTON (AP)—President Barack Obama promised a nation shuddering in economic crisis Tuesday night that he would lead it from a dire "day of reckoning" to a brighter future, summoning politicians and public alike to shoulder responsibility for hard choices and shared sacrifice. "The time to take charge of our future is here," Obama declared, delivering his first address to a joint session of Congress.

Offering words of reassurance to an anxious nation, he declared, "Tonight I want every American to know this: We will rebuild, we will recover, and the United States of America will emerge stronger than before."

"We are a nation that has seen promise and peril," he said. "Now we must be that nation again."

Cheered robustly as he entered the House chamber, Obama grinned, shook hands and kissed lawmakers and stopped for a lengthy embrace with Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, back on the bench only this week after surgery for pancreatic cancer.

To deal with the current crisis, deepening each day, the president said more money will be needed to rescue troubled banks beyond the $700 billion already committed last year. He said he knows that bailout billions for banks are unpopular—"I promise you, I get it," he said—but he also insisted that was the only way to get credit moving again to households and businesses, the lifeblood of the American economy.

Along with aid for banks, he also called on Congress to move quickly on legislation to overhaul outdated regulations on the nation's financial markets.

"I ask this Congress to join me in doing whatever proves necessary," Obama said. "Because we cannot consign our nation to an open-ended recession."

Thinking longer-term, Obama said in a speech lacking many specifics and devoid of initiatives that both political parties must give up favored programs while uniting behind his campaign promises to build better schools, expand health care coverage and move the nation to "greener" fuel use.

Just five weeks after his inauguration, Obama addressed an ebullient Democratic congressional majority and an embattled but reinvigorated GOP minority as well as millions of anxious viewers.

AP

President Barack Obama gestures during his address to a joint session of Congress in the House Chamber of the Capitol in Washington, Tuesday, Feb. 24, 2009.

GOP *leaders say Obama's plan is irresponsible*

WASHINGTON (AP)—Republican leaders continued their attacks on President Barack Obama's handling of the economy Tuesday, calling it irresponsible and certain to increase taxes and federal debt.

Responding to Obama's televised speech to a joint session of Congress, top Republicans said the president relies too heavily on spending, and not enough on tax cuts, to try to revive the gasping economy. They said they want to work with Obama, and sometimes blamed congressional Democrats more than him. But their criticisms were sharp and plentiful.

"The way to lead is not to raise taxes and put more money and power in hands of Washington politicians," said Louisiana Gov. Bobby Jindal, who gave the Republican Party's official response. The massive economic stimulus bill recently enacted by Obama and congressional Democrats, Jindal said, will expand the government, "increase our taxes down the line, and saddle future generations with debt."

"It's irresponsible," said Jindal, who is eyeing a presidential bid in 2012 and frequently cited his accomplishments in Louisiana.

The tone of the Republicans' response was in keeping with their nearly unanimous opposition to the $787 billion economic stimulus bill, which was backed by only three Republicans in the Senate and none in the House. Some Democrats and independents think the Republicans are blundering and misreading most Americans' sentiments about the need for massive government action to help the economy.

More evidence links alcohol, cancer in women

WASHINGTON (AP)—A study of nearly 1.3 million British women offers yet more evidence that moderate alcohol consumption increases the risk of a handful of cancers. British researchers surveyed middle-aged women at breast cancer screening clinics about their drinking habits, and tracked their health for seven years.

A quarter of the women reported no alcohol use. Nearly all the rest reported fewer than three drinks a day; the average was one drink a day. Researchers compared the lightest drinkers—two or fewer drinks a week—with people who drank more.

Each extra drink per day increased the risk of breast, rectal and liver cancer, University of Oxford researchers reported Tuesday in the Journal of the National Cancer Institute. The type of alcohol—wine, beer or liquor—didn't matter.

That supports earlier research, but the new wrinkle: Alcohol consumption was linked to esophageal and oral cancers only when smokers drank.

Also, moderate drinkers actually had a lower risk of thyroid cancer, non-Hodgkin's lymphoma and renal cell cancer.

For an individual woman, the overall alcohol risk is small. In developed countries, about 118 of every 1,000 women develop any of these cancers, and each extra daily drink added 11 breast cancers and four of the other types to that rate, the study found.

But population-wide, 13 percent of those cancers in Britain may be attributable to alcohol, the researchers concluded.

Moderate alcohol use has long been thought to be heart-healthy, something the new research doesn't address but that prompts repeated debate about safe levels. U.S. health guidelines already recommend that women consume no more than one drink a day; two a day for men, who metabolize alcohol differently.

"You have to balance all those things out," said Dr. Philip J. Brooks, who researches alcohol and cancer at the National Institutes of Health. "This kind of information is important for people to know and to consult with their physician about the various risk factors they have."

Toddler, 6 others shot on Mardi Gras parade route

NEW ORLEANS (AP)—A Mardi Gras parade erupted into chaos on Fat Tuesday when a series of gunshots struck seven people, including a toddler. The child was not seriously injured and two suspects were in custody, police said.

The shootings happened near the Garden District about 1:40 p.m. after the last major parade of the celebration, Rex, had ended. A stream of truck floats that follow the parade were passing by when gunfire broke out.

"It sounded like a string of fireworks, so I knew it was more than one shooter," said Toni Labat, 29, a limousine company manager. She was with her two children, a 2-year-old boy and a 10-year-old girl.

"Everybody was petrified. They hit the ground, the floats stopped, everybody on the floats ducked," Labat said.

Labat said one man dragged himself on the ground screaming for help after being wounded and another man was gasping for air and bleeding from his mouth.

Police spokesman Bob Young said the victims—three men ages 50, 33 and 20, two young women ages 20 and 17 and a 15-year-old boy—were taken to area hospitals. Young said the 20-month-old baby was grazed by a bullet and not seriously hurt.

The two most seriously injured victims were shot in the stomach and underwent surgery, said Officer Janssen Valencia, though he didn't know the men's conditions. The others were listed in stable condition Tuesday night with injuries not considered life-threatening.

Police believe the victims were bystanders hit at random, though a motive for the shooting hasn't been determined, Valencia said. Their names weren't released.

Dr. Jim Parry, 41, a surgeon who was with a gathering of doctors near the shooting site, ran over to tend to one man who he said had been shot in the abdomen. "He kept asking me, 'Was I shot? Was I shot?'"

Paramedics arrived and took over for the Air Force reservist.

"I'm off to Afghanistan this summer. Damn, this is more dangerous than Afghanistan," Parry said.

Two men, 19-year-old Mark Brooks and 18-year-old Louis Lazone, both of New Orleans, were each booked with seven counts of attempted first-degree murder. Brooks also faces a charge of possession of a firearm by a convicted felon, Young said. It was not immediately known if the men had attorneys.

Three weapons believed used in the shooting were recovered, Young said.

ACROSS THE NATION

Boy held in Pa. killing to go to juvenile facility

NEW CASTLE, Pa. (AP)—An 11-year-old boy charged with killing his father's pregnant fiancee will be moved from a county jail to a juvenile facility under a court order issued Tuesday. A judge agreed that it is in Jordan Brown's best interest to be housed in the Allencrest Juvenile Detention Center northwest of Pittsburgh. Brown will remain charged as an adult in the shooting death of 26-year-old Kenzie Marie Houk, though his attorney said he will ask to have the case moved to a juvenile court. "What we have learned is ... that under Pennsylvania law he can continue to be ... prosecuted as an adult and be housed in a secure juvenile detention center," defense attorney Dennis Elisco said. Brown is accused of shooting Houk in the head Friday, killing her and her unborn baby boy.

Burris refuses to resign despite plea from Durbin

WASHINGTON (AP)—Sen. Roland Burris refused to resign on Tuesday, rebuffing a call from the Senate's No. 2 Democrat who made it clear that the embattled Illinois lawmaker has little hope next year of winning the seat vacated by President Barack Obama. "I told him that under the circumstances, I would resign," fellow Illinois Sen. Richard Durbin told reporters after an hour-long meeting with Burris. "He said, 'I'm not going to resign.'" "I can't force him," Durbin added. Burris was appointed by disgraced former Gov. Rod Blagojevich, who was impeached and driven from office after he was accused of trying to sell the Senate seat. Burris repeatedly changed his story about how he was appointed. He is facing calls for his resignation after he admitted trying to raise money for Blagojevich. Burris has said he did nothing wrong.

Palin to pay Alaska nearly $7,000 for kids' trips

JUNEAU, Alaska (AP)—Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin will reimburse the state nearly $7,000 for costs associated with nine trips taken by her children, her attorney said Tuesday. Palin must reimburse the state within 120 days, according to a settlement agreement filed by a special investigator hired by the Alaska Personnel Board to investigate an ethics complaint filed against her. The exact amount will be determined by the Alaska Department of Administration, said Palin's attorney, Thomas Van Flein. He estimated the amount would be $6,800. There is no state law prohibiting the governor's family from traveling with her and the personnel board found no wrongdoing on the part of the governor. But the investigator, Timothy Petumenos, interpreted the Alaska Executive Branch Ethics Act to require that state only pay if the first family serves an important state interest.

Asia

NKorea prepares launch: Satellite or missile?

SEOUL, South Korea (AP)—North Korea declared Tuesday it is making "brisk headway" in plans to send a satellite into orbit as part of its space program, a launch regional powers fear is a cover up for testing a long-range ballistic missile capable of striking Alaska and the western United States.

Analysts called Pyongyang's announcement yet another bid for President Barack Obama's attention as he met in Washington with Prime Minister Taro Aso of Japan, a key ally in the regional push to get North Korea to give up its nuclear program.

State Department spokesman Robert Wood told reporters Tuesday that North Korea should focus on its commitments to international negotiators working to rid the North of its nuclear weapons.

"Intimidation and threats are not helpful to try to bring about regional stability," Wood said.

North Korea's declaration came just days after U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, on a trip to Asia, urged the country to put an end to "provocative actions."

"The North has sent the ball back into the U.S. court," said Kim Yong-hyun, a professor at Seoul's Dongguk University, calling the threat a tactic to pressure Washington into opening negotiations surrounding Pyongyang's nuclear program.

AP

South Korea protesters shout a slogan during a rally against the United States and South Korean government's policy on North Korea in front of the Defense Military in Seoul, South Korea, Tuesday, Feb. 24, 2009.

The U.N. Security Council passed a resolution prohibiting Pyongyang from engaging in any ballistic activity following a missile launch in 2006. North Korea could face additional sanctions if it violates the resolution.

In New York, U.N. deputy spokeswoman Marie Okabe said Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon was "monitoring the situation very closely."

North Korea hinted at a plan to launch a satellite last week when it marked autocratic leader Kim Jong Il's 67th birthday by asserting North Korea's right to develop a peaceful space program—words the regime has used in the past to disguise a missile test.

A statement carried Tuesday by state-run Korean Central News Agency said "preparations for launching experimental communications satellite Kwangmyongsong-2 by means of delivery rocket Unha-2 are now making brisk headway" at a launch site in Hwadae County in the northeast. The statement called the upcoming launch "a giant stride forward" for the country's space program.

Border guards launch mutiny in Bangladesh capital

DHAKA, Bangladesh (AP)—Mutinous border guards opened fire inside their headquarters and seized a shopping mall in the Bangladesh capital Wednesday, injuring several people in an apparent pay dispute, officials and reports said. The army moved in to quell the unrest.

Sajjad Haider, a spokesman for Bangladesh Rifles, the official name of the border guards, said gunfire erupted inside the agency's Dhaka headquarters compound, but that he did not have details about the violence.

"The army has moved in to deal with the situation," Haider said.

An Associated Press correspondent said intermittent gunshots rang out at the border guards' headquarters nearly four hours after the start of violence and that smoke billowed from the compound. Army troops took positions outside the nearby shopping mall seized by the mutineers.

Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's newly elected government urged the revolting border guards to lay down their arms and return to barracks, offering to hold talks over their demands, said a statement from the Bangladesh military.

An ETV correspondent reporting live from the scene earlier said guards came out of their barracks and seized a conference hall where officers were meeting. The troops chanted slogans for more pay and better facilities, the report said.

Some of the troops also stormed out of the complex and seized the nearby shopping mall, ETV said.

Several bystanders outside the complex were injured and taken to state-run Dhaka Medical College Hospital, ETV reported.

The fighting occurred a day after Hasina visited the headquarters and addressed the troops, urging them to become "more disciplined and remain ever ready to guard the country's frontiers."

Taliban extends cease-fire in Pakistani valley

ISLAMABAD (AP)—Taliban militants in Pakistan's Swat valley extended a cease-fire Tuesday, strengthening a peace process that Western governments say risks granting a safe haven to extremists close to the Afghan border.

Nevertheless, it remained unclear whether the militants would agree to a government offer to impose a version of Islamic law in the northwestern region in exchange for giving up their weapons.

Islamabad has dispatched an Islamist cleric with ties to the insurgency to negotiate with militants in the valley, though neither side has given many details on how the talks are going or when a formal agreement is expected.

Troops and insurgents have observed a truce in Swat since Feb. 15 when Islamabad initiated the peace process.

Swat Taliban spokesman Muslim Khan said the cease-fire had been extended "for an indefinite period" and that he expected the military to also abide by the truce.

Late Tuesday, militant commander Maulana Fazlullah told his fighters about the truce in a broadcast over an FM frequency.

"We will make this pact a success to bring peace. I want to ask all of our men not to display weapons, not to attack army vehicles and not to attack their supply lines," he said. "Anybody who violates these orders should expect a strict action."

The military has been abiding by the truce but has said it will not withdraw from the valley until there is lasting peace. The military did not immediately comment on the Taliban's announcement Tuesday.

Swat has been wracked by an increasingly widespread insurgency since mid-2007 despite the presence of some 12,000 soldiers. The militants have killed secular politicians and critics, bombed girls schools and enforced their own hardline version of Islamic law.

The Islamic justice system offered last week by the government is restricted to changes in the region's court system and contains no provisions for the harsh measures espoused by the Taliban. Given that and the militants' position of strength in the valley, analysts have questioned the incentive for them to sign up.

Afghan bomb kills 4 US troops; deadliest this year

KABUL (AP)—A roadside bomb killed four U.S. troops in southern Afghanistan on Tuesday, inflicting the year's deadliest single attack on international forces a week after Washington set plans to send reinforcements. An Afghan civilian working with the Americans also died.

The Americans were patrolling with Afghan soldiers when their vehicle struck a bomb Tuesday afternoon, the U.S. military said in a statement. The military withheld identities of the dead and the attack's location pending notification of relatives.

The previous deadliest attack on U.S. troops this year was an explosion in Zabul province in January that killed three Americans.

Twenty-nine U.S. military personnel have died in Afghanistan this year, far surpassing the eight Americans killed in the first two months of 2008. A total of 654 have died since the U.S.-led offensive that ousted Afghanistan's Taliban regime in late 2001.

Taliban militants have increased attacks the last three years and now hold sway in large areas of countryside, leading the Obama administration to promise an intensified focus on defeating Islamic extremists in this region.

ASIAN BRIEFS

33 killed when bus plunges into river in India

JAMMU, India (AP)—A passenger bus plunged into a river in the Indian part of Kashmir on Wednesday, killing at least 33 people, police said. The accident occurred near Pranoo village, some 105 miles (170 kilometers) northeast of Jammu town, K. Rajindera, the inspector general of police for the state's Jammu region said. An additional 19 people were injured in the accident, and rescue operations were continuing, Rajindera said. The bus plunged about 250 feet (76 meters) into the fast-moving Chenab river. The cause of the accident was not immediately known, but Rajindera said the 32-seater vehicle was overcrowded. Deadly road accidents are common in India, often caused by aging vehicles, overloading and reckless driving.

Drought worsens in northwest China

BEIJING (AP)—China's monthslong drought has worsened in northwestern Gansu even after snow and rainfall eased the crisis in seven other provinces, the Agriculture Ministry said Wednesday. The ministry's Web site called the current situation "grim," with 80 percent of the farmland for winter crops affected—a total of 1.1 million acres (483,000 hectares)—because of little precipitation, high temperatures and decreased river flow. The country's worst drought in nearly five decades affected a huge swath of northern and central China, and Beijing declared an emergency at the beginning of the month after a drop in rainfall caused winter wheat crops to wither and left millions of people in eight provinces without adequate drinking water. "Now the drought situation is as bad as that 60 years ago when people's lives relied totally on rainfall," Tang Shili, a local government official from central Gansu was quoted as saying in the official China Daily.

Military: Sri Lankan troops enter last rebel town

COLOMBO, Sri Lanka (AP)—Sri Lankan forces entered the last town under rebel control Tuesday, the military said, as the government brushed aside international calls for a cease-fire to allow tens of thousands of civilians to escape the war zone. In recent months, the military has driven the Tamil Tigers out of their major strongholds in the north and confined them to a small patch of coastal land along the northeast. The government has vowed to destroy the rebels and end the 25-year-old civil war plaguing this island nation. After breaching rebel defenses, troops entered the edge of Puthukkudiyiruppu on Tuesday and were fighting house-to-house battles with small groups of rebels on the outskirts of the town, military spokesman Brig. Udaya Nanayakkara said. "They are resisting and retreating," Nanyakkara said of the rebel fighters.

World

Hamas and Fatah to begin talks on repairing rift

GAZA CITY, Gaza Strip (AP)—The Islamic militants of Hamas and the moderates of Fatah have never had more compelling reasons to repair the rift between them that is fast destroying their dreams for a Palestinian state.

As they begin a new round of unity talks after several failed attempts, Hamas needs the Western-backed Fatah's international legitimacy to get foreign aid to rebuild Gaza, which was devastated in Israel's recent offensive.

Fatah chief Mahmoud Abbas badly needs an alliance with Hamas to bolster his political standing, eroded after his term as Palestinian president expired and a victory by hard-liners in Israel's election undermined the pragmatists' central tenet: that peaceful negotiations with Israel will win Palestinians a state.

But a unity agreement appears to be a long shot. Distrust between Hamas and Fatah runs deep after a three-year power struggle, including a civil war that ended with Hamas' violent takeover of Gaza in 2007, leaving Abbas' Fatah in charge of just the West Bank.

Sami Suboh, a 32-year-old doctor whose house was destroyed during Israel's Gaza offensive, said he hoped for a unity deal soon.

"With the unity government everything would go back to normal. I hope that they can reach an agreement," he said, waiting in line for Red Cross aid supplies. But he added, "It is unlikely."

The sides traded nasty accusations this week despite pledges to be civil ahead of reconciliation talks beginning Wednesday in Cairo.

Hamas claimed Abbas' government ran a Gaza spy ring that fed Israel information about Hamas targets during the fighting. Fatah accused Hamas of killing and wounding dozens of Fatah activists under the cover of the war.

"All Hamas has been doing is poison the atmosphere," said Abbas aide Yasser Abed Rabbo. Ehab Ghussein, a Hamas official, countered that Fatah's statements prove it is not interested in making amends.

Partly to clear the air, top officials—Ahmed Qureia of Fatah and Mussa Abu Marzuk of Hamas—agreed to a preliminary meeting Tuesday, according to Abbas aide Nabil Shaath. Abbas' security officials also freed 42 Hamas detainees in the West Bank on Tuesday in a goodwill gesture and promised more releases the next day, said Ayman Daraghmeh, a Hamas legislator.

The talks beginning Wednesday will include meetings between Egyptian intelligence chief Omar Suleiman and officials from both sides.

The Egyptians envision five negotiating committees dealing with making goodwill gestures, forming an interim government, holding presidential and legislative elections, restructuring the security services and finding a role for Hamas in the Fatah-run Palestine Liberation Organization.

On March 2, representatives of about 80 donor countries, including U.S. Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton, are to meet in the Egyptian resort of Sharm el-Sheik to pledge money for Gaza's reconstruction.

According to Palestinian estimates, Israel's offensive caused some $2 billion in physical damage and economic losses.

Best job in Brazil? Painting nude Carnival models

RIO DE JANEIRO (AP)—Betto Almeida is the Mr. Lucky of Rio's Carnival.

The 36-year-old artist awakes at 8 a.m. Has a little breakfast. Survives a commute through the city's tough traffic. Arrives at the office by 11.

Then he spends hours painting the bodies of gorgeous women—and earning as much as $2,000 a day.

"You wouldn't believe how many applications I get for an assistant," Almeida deadpanned, never taking his eyes from his work as he brushed bright orange paint on the stomach of a model in his glass-enclosed studio under the grandstands at the Sambadrome, where Rio's Carnival parades ended Tuesday at dawn.

"But it's hard work, man. I take my job seriously."

Slight, soft-spoken and unassuming, Almeida devotes his art to a sideshow of the samba parades: models who earn about $250 a night to mingle, clad only in paint, with high-rollers in the luxury boxes.

Wearing plaid pants, a green shirt with a red phoenix on it and a denim-and-camouflage hat, Almeida goes about his work with a nonchalant air as the party-crazed hordes outside press their noses to the glass and snap photos.

His day job is art director on television soap operas, but for the past 12 years he has been brushing, dripping and spraying paint on some of the most beautiful bodies Brazil's Carnival has to display.

Michele Peres, a 28-year-old model wearing tiny black shorts, snakeskin stilettos and a watch, said the quality of Almeida's work was vital to her professional success.

"I've been doing this for nine years, for Carnival and other events," she said as Almeida painted a jaguar on her breasts. "He is the best body painter I've come across and his work draws more attention to me. It is good for him, it is good for me."

AP

Artist Betto Almeida, 36, paints the body of a dancer before a carnival parade in Rio de Janeiro, Monday, Feb. 23, 2009.

A gentleman tapped on the studio window and, as gingerly as a drunk Carnival reveler could, requested that Peres turn toward the growing crowd. With a barely perceptible sigh, she complied, not hesitating to light up a smile once the cameras started popping.

US soldier killed in police attack in Iraq

BAGHDAD (AP)—Two Iraqi policemen opened fire Tuesday during a U.S. military inspection visit in northern Iraq, killing one American soldier and an interpreter in an attack that deepened worries of possible infiltration of security forces battling insurgents in their last major base.

The shooting at a police outpost in Mosul wounded three other U.S. soldiers. It was the fourth attack in the region since late 2007 with suspected links to Iraqi security units, which have struggled to uproot al-Qaida from strongholds in Iraq's third-largest city.

Any serious breaches in the Iraqi force could be a particular blow in the Mosul region—where the U.S. military is light and commanders have been generally unable to spawn the type of tribal militia uprisings that helped break insurgent control in other areas of Iraq.

The U.S. military said one interpreter was killed in a small-arms attack and a soldier died later of wounds. Three other soldiers and another Iraqi interpreter were wounded. The military statement gave no other details, saying the attack was under investigation.

The two policemen began shooting as the Americans toured an Iraqi police unit guarding a key bridge in Mosul, about 225 miles northwest of Baghdad, police spokesman Brig. Gen. Saeed al-Jubouri said.

The attackers then fled in a car from the headquarters, a collection of concrete towers and bunkers.

Al-Jubouri denied reports that the gunmen could have been insurgents dressed in police uniforms—a tactic used before in suicide bombings and attacks.

He identified them as a sergeant major and rank-and-file officer from Shura, a village about 25 miles south of Mosul. Iraqi troops were sent to the village, but there was no immediate report the suspects had been located.

Paris appeals court acquits ex-Guantanamo inmates

PARIS (AP)—A Paris appeals court on Tuesday overturned the terrorism convictions of five former detainees at Guantanamo Bay, ruling French police agents were out of line in questioning them at the U.S. prison camp.

France is among the few Western countries to prosecute nationals who have returned home from Guantanamo—and the ruling marks the latest high-profile foreign disavowal of the secretive center that President Barack Obama's administration wants to shutter for good.

The appeals court ruled that agents from the French counterterrorism agency DST who questioned the five inmates at Guantanamo in 2002 and 2004 had overstepped their roles. Overturning a lower court's conviction, the appeals court said DST could not act as both a spy agency and a judicial police service, the body French law says is authorized to interrogate detainees.

State prosecutors said they would appeal to the highest French court, the Court of Cassation.

The men, who were arrested in Afghanistan in 2001, each spent a total of 2-1/2 to 3 years in custody at Guantanamo and in France, to which they were repatriated in 2004 and 2005.

WORLD BRIEFS

Holocaust-denying bishop scuffles with reporter

BUENOS AIRES, Argentina (AP)—A British bishop whose denial of the Holocaust embroiled the pope in controversy left Argentina Tuesday after the government ordered him out, calling his statements "an insult" to humanity. A local television station showed Richard Williamson angrily pushing the reporter as he hurried to catch his flight to London. Argentina's government on Thursday ordered the traditionalist Catholic bishop to leave the country or face expulsion for failing to declare a job change as required by immigration law. The order also cited his denials of the Holocaust. Pope Benedict XVI sought last month to help heal a rift with ultra-traditionalists by lifting a 20-year-old excommunication decree imposed on Williamson and three other bishops who had been consecrated without Vatican approval.

Turkish politician defies law with Kurdish speech

ISTANBUL (AP)—The leader of Turkey's Kurdish lawmakers startled the country Tuesday by speaking in his native language in Parliament, breaking the law in a country that has tried for decades to keep a firm grip over the restive minority amid fears of national division. State-run television immediately cut off the live broadcast of legislator Ahmet Turk, ostensibly to celebrate UNESCO world languages week. But his real aim was to challenge the country's policy toward its Kurdish population, a suppression of rights that only recently has started to ease. "Kurds have long been oppressed because they did not know any other language," Turk said. "I promised myself that I would speak in my mother tongue at an official meeting one day." Kurdish lawmakers gave Turk a standing ovation. His party has 21 legislators in the 550-seat parliament.

Somali fighters attack peacekeeping base; 18 dead

MOGADISHU, Somalia (AP)—Islamic insurgents attacked a peacekeeping base in the Somali capital for the second time in a week Tuesday, and clashes between the soldiers and militants left at least 18 people dead throughout the city. Dozens of others, including women and children, were seriously injured in the fighting, which came two days after a suicide bomber attacked an African Union peacekeeping base, killing 11 Burundian soldiers. An extremist Islamic group called al-Shabab, which claims the AU troops are an occupying force and has threatened them, claimed responsibility for Sunday's attack. The U.S. State Department considers al-Shabab a terrorist organization linked to al-Qaida, something the group has denied. Spokesman Robert Wood called Sunday's attackers "desperate extremists who aim to strip from the Somali people an opportunity to determine their own future."

Environment

Aquaculture, science, and self-reliance

The project is the San Vicente Aquaculture Science and Self-Reliance Project. Aquaculture and science go together, but what does self-reliance have to do with it? A keynote speaker at an award ceremony for the National Science Foundation told teachers that it would not be possible to train enough scientists. Between 2003 and 2005 there were 1.9 million college graduates in different science fields (Nation Science Foundation statistics) and most were easily placed in science related jobs. As these 1.9 million scientists begin working, they create more science related jobs as new discoveries require more research, and applications require skilled scientists to operate and maintain systems and equipment. As students learn science, they are gaining knowledge that has the potential to make them self-reliant by being highly employable.

The Boys Scouts demonstrate self-reliance during their regular campouts.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The San Vicente project is being funded by the Administration for Native Americans, which is under the Department of Human Health Services, the federal agency that receives more tax dollars than any other agency. The department of Human Health Services has eight strategic goals and goal No. 6 is "Improve the economic and social well-being of individuals, families, and communities, especially those most in need." In other words to help the people who are the least self-reliant to become self-reliant. Not only will San Vicente students be learning skills to become self-reliant through employment; their families will be raising their own food and starting their own businesses. A benchmark of success of this program will be self-reliant families supporting themselves and their community.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Boys Scouts learn how to cook for themselves during their monthly campouts.

ANA funds projects, not programs. Programs that are federally funded require the funding from the federal government in order to continue; they are not self-sustaining. Projects, on the other hand, must either be complete at the end of the project period or self-sustaining. To receive ANA funding the project must explain how it will be self-sustaining by the end of the project period. ANA also requires commitments from the community because experience has shown that without community support, projects do not become self-sustaining or self-reliant. The San Vicente Aquaculture Science and Self-Reliance project has 15 letters of commitment from different business and individuals on Saipan. Two of the organizations that are directly related to the self-reliance aspect of the project are the Boy Scouts of America Troop 913, and the Commonwealth Development Authority.

The Boys Scouts have demonstrated their commitment to the project by cleaning and painting the aquaculture tanks after they were damaged by two typhoons. The Boy Scout motto is "Be prepared." Boy Scouts are taught to be self reliant by being prepared. They practice this on their monthly campouts where they do not have mom or dad cooking for them, cleaning up after them, or any of the comforts provided by electric or electronic appliances. Boy Scouts are expected to show up at the campouts with everything they need to survive during the campout in their backpacks. The Boy Scouts participating in the aquaculture project become role models and they also recruit new members.

The Commonwealth Development Authority's mission is "to provide economic loan funds to private and public sectors for economic development." Note that they provide loans, not grants, for the purpose of stimulating economic development. It is very likely that CDA will have the opportunity to receive federal stimulus money to jumpstart the CNMI economy along with the rest of the United States. A particular point made by President Obama to the agencies receiving these funds is that they must be accountable. To receive the funds the agencies must use the SMART principle:

S = Specific: Specific as to how the funds will be used.

M = Measureable: What tool will be used to measure the results (number of new business, increase in income)

A = Achievable: Is it possible to achieve the desired results.

R = Realistic: Given the circumstances and economic conditions, are the goals realistic.

T = Time: Specific times must be specific as to when the expected results will be achieved.

Any money given to CDA from the federal government will require that these principles be followed. Banks receiving stimulus money will also be required to follow the SMART principles; however, they have a big advantage over CDA in that they can make loans to low-risk customers. A requirement for receiving a CDA loan is a rejection letter from a local bank for the proposed business. Even with the burden of only financing high risk loans, CDA must demonstrate accountability by earning interest on their loans, so that earned income can be used to finance other economic development activities. CDA's commitment to the San Vicente Aquaculture and Self-Reliance project is to assist community members interested in starting their own aquaculture or farming business. They will provide counseling and assistance in writing business plans, and they will fund the well-written plans. People interested in starting their own aquaculture related business should contact CDA, or Pete Arriola, the project outreach manager, who will act as a liaison between CDA and the project community.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Boy Scouts learn how to make their own go-karts.

As the former President John F. Kennedy said in his 1961 inaugural address, "Ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." As members of the Saipan community become more self-reliant there will be fewer people asking the government to take care of them with jobs and other assistance, and more people taking care of themselves as well as their brothers and sisters in their communities. ***(San Vicente Aquaculture Science and Self-Reliance management team)***

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

This file photo shows then first lady Hillary R. Clinton posing with teachers after an awards ceremony for the National Science Foundation.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

The Commonwealth Development Authority staff and personnel. The CDA's mission is "to provide economic loan funds to private and public sectors for economic development."

Life & Style

Dad: Suleman under duress before NBC interview

CHICAGO (AP)—Nadya Suleman's father told Oprah Winfrey on her talk show that his daughter was under duress before giving an interview to NBC and should have been given time to recover from giving birth to octuplets.

"They took her out of the hospital by midnight to a secret location," Suleman's father Ed Doud told Winfrey on the show that aired Tuesday. "They did not even give her a chance to rest, to sleep, where she's still under medication and not feeling well.

"They bombard her with all these cameras," Doud said. "I am not saying that they kidnapped her. What I am saying is that it absolutely should have given her a little time until she heals at least and not be under so much medication."

The NBC interviews with Suleman aired Feb. 9 and 10 on the network's "Today" and "Dateline" shows. She gave birth to the eight babies Jan. 26 and was released from the hospital Feb. 5 after a more than two-month stay.

"NBC News stands by every aspect of our interview with Nadya Suleman," NBC said in a statement e-mailed to The Associated Press. "Contrary to her father's allegations, we did not take Nadya from the hospital and the interview, which was conducted with respect, took place at a time of her choosing."

Winfrey asked Doud if he felt his daughter gave NBC the interview under duress. "That's how I feel," Doud said in the segment that was taped Thursday.

Suleman, 33, is a single mother who is unemployed and lives with her mother in a three-bedroom home. She already had six children when she gave birth to the octuplets. All 14 of her children were conceived through in vitro fertilization, with sperm from an unidentified, platonic friend, she has said.

AP

This file photo, supplied by Harpo Productions, shows Ed Doud, father of Nadya Suleman who gave birth to octuplets in late January 2009, tapes an interview with Oprah Winfrey that aired on Tuesday,Feb. 24, 2009 in her Chicago studios on Thursday, Feb. 19, 2009.

In the NBC interview, Suleman said she "longed for certain connections and attachments with another person that ... I really lacked, I believe, growing up." She called her childhood "pretty dysfunctional."

Doud disputed those statements, telling Winfrey his daughter was spoiled.

"We gave her so much love," he said. "No child has so much love. I thought what she meant is because she is the only child. I'm sure that's what she meant. She really wanted a brother or sister."

Doud told Winfrey he plans to help his daughter, ex-wife and 14 grandchildren. He did not specify how.

Also Tuesday, the second in a series of videotaped conversations between Suleman and her mother, Angela Suleman, was posted on the celebrity news Web site Radaronline.com. In the clip, Nadya Suleman said she hopes to write a book to help support her children—allowing that the only time she'll have to do so is in the "middle of the night."

The Web site also posted a video of Nadya Suleman saying she wants to move after a neighbor came out of his home with a shotgun and said he was going to kill someone on Monday night.

Police are investigating the incident. They say it wasn't a specific threat to Suleman and may have been directed at media and others who have frequented the cul-de-sac since she gave birth.

NBC's interview with Suleman was its most-watched prime-time show that week. "Dateline NBC" hadn't seen an audience that large since Matt Lauer interviewed Prince William and Prince Harry in 2007—an indication that viewers have an intense interest in the subject.

"People are incredibly torn over their feelings, that people can act this way or that they could be allowed to act that way," said Jim Murphy, executive producer of ABC's "Good Morning America."

It's why television shows have fought for pieces of the story, like Suleman's father on Winfrey's Chicago-based show. The biggest interview remaining is her fertility doctor, who has declined to comment since the octuplets' birth.

"Good Morning America" heavily promoted an interview on Monday with Denis Beaudoin, who said he was in a relationship with Suleman in the late 1990s and had donated sperm at her request. Suleman has said Beaudoin is not the father of the octuplets, but he wants DNA testing.

Over the weekend, ABC teased the story in promos that didn't identify Beaudoin by name, but urged viewers to tune in Monday to find out.

Mystery ends: Agatha Christie's country home opens

LONDON (AP)—The house has everything an Agatha Christie fan could want—except a body in the library.

The stuccoed Georgian villa where the writer spent her vacations is opening to the public for the first time beginning Saturday after a $7.8 million restoration. Visitors can see the bedroom where Christie slept, the dining room where she entertained, and the drawing room where she thrilled friends with readings from her latest whodunit.

Craftsmen worked for two years to restore the 18th-century home, Greenway, and the rooms are much as they were when Christie lived there, complete with books, papers, boxes of chocolates and bunches of flowers. Even the scratches on the bedroom door made by the family dog remain.

"It does feel very much in a time warp," Robyn Brown, who manages Greenway on behalf of the National Trust heritage group, said Tuesday.

That is exactly the way the trust likes it—the group preserves Britain's historic properties with a rigorous attention to detail. The cream paint in the bedroom and the mushroom-colored library walls are as close as possible to the shades chosen by Christie herself. The sofas and chairs come from her childhood home.

AP

In this photo released by the National Trust, the English holiday home where mystery writer Agatha Christie spent her summers and entertained guests with readings from her thrillers is seen in Galmpton, Devon, southwest England, Feb. 20, 2009.

Christie's grandson, Mathew Prichard, said he hoped the renovation would let visitors "feel some of the magic and sense of place that I felt when my family and I spent so much time there in the 1950s and '60s."

Visitors can see Christie's bedroom, with its view of grounds sloping down to the River Dart, the formal dining room and a manuscript room full of Christie first editions.

During World War II, the house was requisitioned by the U.S. Navy amid preparations for D-Day. The home's restorers have retained a vivid frieze of wartime scenes painted on the library walls by Lt. Marshall Lee, a U.S. Coast Guard war artist.

There is also the drawing room, where friends and family would gather to hear Christie read from her latest manuscript and then try to guess whodunit. The trust said her husband, archaeologist Max Mallowan, would usually awake from a doze to announce the name of the murderer.

Christie bought the house in Devon, 200 miles southwest of London, in 1938 and spent holidays there until 1959. She died in 1976, aged 85.

Her family donated Greenway to the National Trust nine years ago, but until now only its lush gardens full of fruit trees, flowers, ferns and even palm trees have been open to the public. The house remained off-limits until its occupants—the writer's daughter Rosalind and her husband—died in 2004 and 2005.

Greenway is a mystery-lovers' mecca, the country house that spawned a clutch of country-house thrillers. The National Trust said it is considering holding murder-mystery tours and Christie-themed events once the house has been open for a while.

Christie had deep roots in Devon, a region of beaches, dramatic river valleys, hills and stretches of wild moorland. She was born there in 1890, and 15 of her books have Devon settings, including "And Then There Were None," "Ordeal by Innocence" and "The Murder at Hazelmoor."

Greenway itself is the inspiration for the setting of "Dead Man's Folly," in which Belgian sleuth Hercule Poirot investigates the murder of a Girl Guide at a mystery writer's country home.

Brown says the trust also hopes Greenway will give visitors a glimpse of England in the 1950s, an era "when life was a little less complicated than it is now."

For Christie, the prolific author of 80 crime novels and short story collections, two autobiographies and eight romance novels under the pseudonym Mary Westmacott, the house was also a retreat from the pressures of celebrity.

"I don't think she sat comfortably with her fame," Brown said. "Here at Greenway she was known as Mrs. Mallowan, and she was very ordinary. She would go to the village and just be Mrs. M."

'Spider-Man' set for February 2010 Broadway debut

NEW YORK (AP)—Spider-Man has conquered the movies. Now, with a little help from Julie Taymor and U2, it's Broadway's turn.

"Spider-Man, Turn Off the Dark" will open Feb. 18, 2010, at the Hilton Theatre, its producers announced Tuesday.

Preview performances begin Jan. 16.

The musical, directed by Taymor, will feature a score by Bono and The Edge, both of U2. Taymor who was the creative force behind "The Lion King," Disney's long-running musical, now in its second decade on Broadway. She will co-write the "Spider-Man" book with Glen Berger.

The story was inspired by the Marvel comic books hero and will include the story of his origins as well as new material.

No casting was announced.

Other members of the show's production team include set designer George Tsypin, who did the sets for "The Little Mermaid" on Broadway; Eiko Ishioka, costumes; Donald Holder of "The Lion King," lighting; Daniel Ezralow, choreography; and sound designer Jonathan Deans, who has worked for Cirque du Soleil.

"Spider-Man, Turn Off the Dark" is produced by Hello Entertainment/David Garfinkle, Martin McCallum, Marvel Entertainment/David Maisel, Sony Pictures Entertainment and Jeremiah Harris.

Murdoch sorry for NY Post cartoon seen as racist

NEW YORK (AP)—New York Post chair Rupert Murdoch apologized Tuesday for a cartoon that critics said likened a violent chimpanzee shot dead by police to President Barack Obama.

In a statement published in the newspaper, Murdoch said he wanted to "personally apologize to any reader who felt offended, and even insulted." He said the Post will work to be more sensitive.

Murdoch said the cartoon was intended only to "mock a badly written piece of legislation."

The cartoon, which was published Wednesday, depicted the body of the bullet-riddled chimp Travis and two police officers. The caption said: "They'll have to find someone else to write the next stimulus bill."

The chimp was killed in Connecticut last week after mauling a woman.

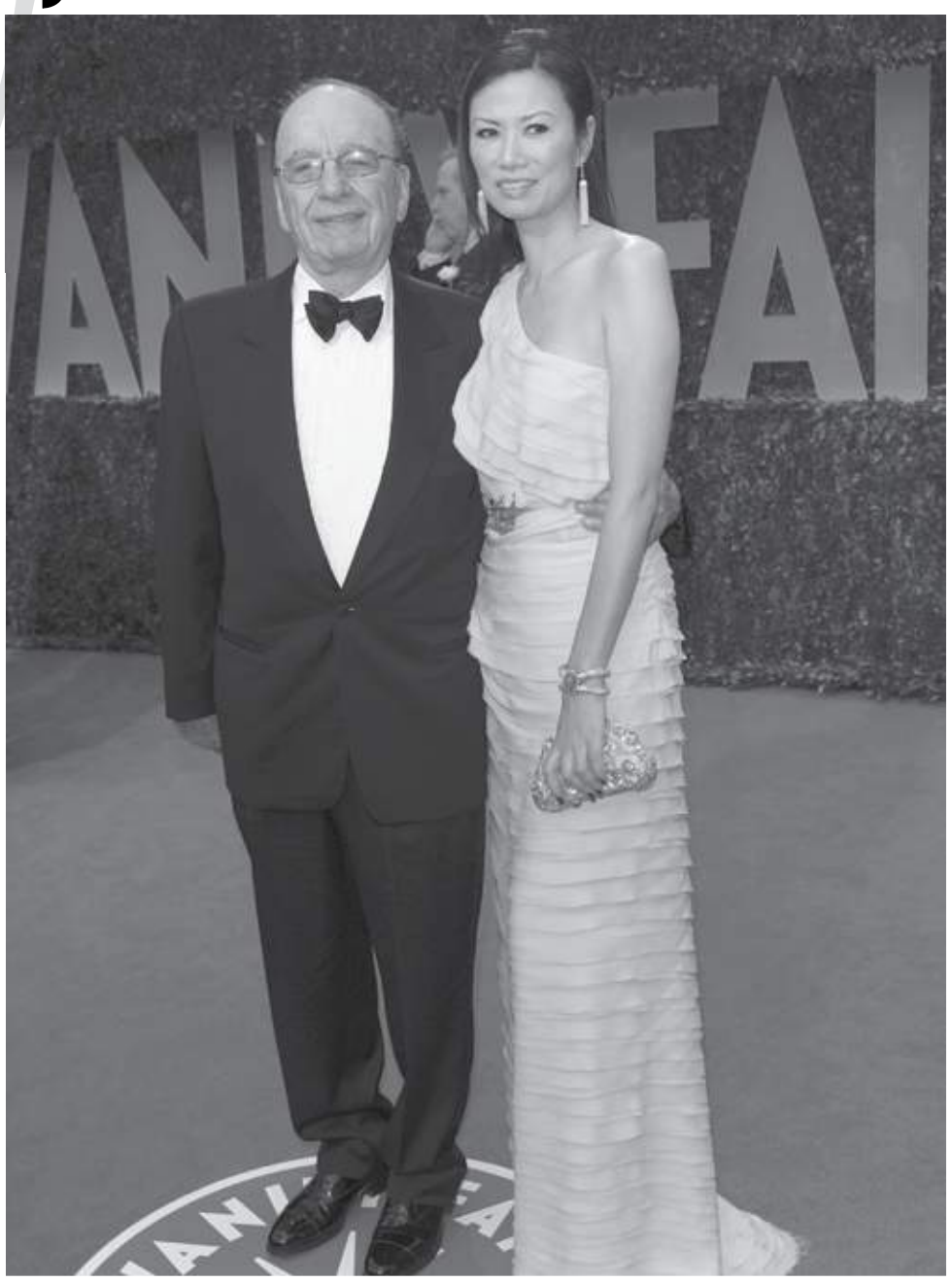
The president of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, which called for a boycott of the Post on Saturday, said Murdoch's pledge to be more sensitive was welcome but did not go far enough.

"Mr. Murdoch's apology comes only after almost a week of tens of thousands of expressions of outrage and disgust from people across the country," NAACP President Benjamin Todd Jealous said in a statement. "The offenders are still on staff and there are no measures being taken to increase diversity in its newsroom."

A spokesman for the Post said the paper declined to comment on the NAACP statement or questions about whether anyone would be disciplined.

The Post also apologized Thursday in an online editorial.

The Rev. Al Sharpton is urging the Federal Communications Commission to review policies allowing Post owner News Corp. to control multiple media outlets in the same market.



Rupert Murdoch and Wendi Deng arrive at the Vanity Fair Oscar party on Sunday, Feb. 22, 2009, in West Hollywood, Calif.

AP

NY Post *drops legendary gossip columnist* Liz Smith

NEW YORK (AP)—The New York Post is dropping Liz Smith's column this week to save money, leaving the legendary gossip columnist without a newspaper home in the city for the first time in 33 years.

Smith

"I'm very sorry that that has come to an end, and that I wasn't valuable enough for them to keep me on," the 86-year-old Smith said Tuesday.

Smith said the daily newspaper declined to renew her $125,000 annual contract in a letter that said, "due to economic circumstances, they were the bearer of bad news and so forth."

Col Allan, the paper's editor-in-chief, said: "The Post is grateful to have been able to publish Liz Smith's legendary column for so many years. We wish her the very best for the future."

Smith writes a syndicated newspaper column that she said is carried by 70 papers around the country. She also publishes in Daily Variety and in Parade magazine, and is part owner of a Web site. Smith says she's also writing a novel and will never retire.

"I'm busy," she said. "I'm OK. I'm OK for a person who's been let go."

In New York, her column had appeared in Newsday until she left in a contract dispute in 2005. The Post had run her column six days a week, and cut it back to three days a year ago to cut costs, despite Smith's unsuccessful appeal to Rupert Murdoch.

Her last column in the Post will appear on Thursday. She's already written it.

"I just wrote the usual stuff," she said, "and then I said goodbye."

Lee in talks to direct 'Life of Pi' adaptation

HONG KONG (AP)—Ang Lee's assistant says the Oscar-winning filmmaker is in talks to direct a movie adaptation of Canadian writer Yann Martel's best-seller "Life of Pi."

David Lee said in an e-mail to The Associated Press Thursday that "the discussion has just begun."

The Hollywood trade publication Variety, which first reported the talks on Tuesday, said Fox 2000 Pictures owns the movie rights and Gil Netter is producing. Calls to Netter's office Thursday went unanswered.

"Life of Pi" is a fable about a boy and a tiger who survive a shipwreck. It won Britain's most prestigious literary award, the Booker Prize, in 2002.

Taiwan-born Ang Lee won a best director Oscar for the 2005 gay romance "Brokeback Mountain." He most recently made "Taking Woodstock," a story set against the Woodstock music festival, which will be released in the U.S. on Aug. 14.

AP

In this Oct. 31, 2007, file photo, director Ang Lee smiles at the premiere of his film "Lust, Caution," at the Shanghai Film Center in Shanghai, China.

'Die Hard' director allowed to withdraw plea

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A judge has allowed "Die Hard" director John McTiernan to withdraw his guilty plea in a case that involved the wiretapping of Hollywood celebrities and had left him with a four-month prison sentence.

U.S. District Judge Dale S. Fischer on Monday granted a request from McTiernan to reverse his plea to a charge of lying to the FBI about his association with convicted private investigator Anthony Pellicano.

McTiernan was not in court for the hearing.

Assistant U.S. Attorney Dan Saunders said a new indictment against McTiernan would be forthcoming. He didn't elaborate.

Fischer also ordered McTiernan's $100,000 fine refunded and set a March 23 hearing for attorneys to further discuss the case.

McTiernan, 58, argued he had inadequate legal representation and was jet-lagged and under the influence of alcohol when he made the plea in April 2006.

McTiernan, whose movie credits also include "Predator," said in his plea agreement that he paid Pellicano to conduct an illegal wiretap of film producer Charles Roven after the two worked on the 2002 film "Rollerball," and that he lied to an FBI agent about the wiretapping.

The director was free on bail while he appealed. In October, the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals vacated McTiernan's four-month sentence and ruled that he was entitled to a hearing on whether he could withdraw his plea.

Pellicano was convicted of bugging phones of celebrities and others to get information for his clients. He was sentenced to 15 years in federal prison.

FIRST DEATH ANNIVERSARY

IN LOVING MEMORY

Consolacion Hocog Naputi

We the family would like to invite our relatives and friends to join us as we commemorate the first death anniversary of our beloved unto eternal life.

Mass is being said at St. Jude Church
Mass Schedule:
February 24, 2009 (Tuesday) 6:00 p.m.
February 25, 2009 (Wednesday) 6:00 p.m.
February 26, 2009 (Thursday) 6:00 p.m.
February 27, 2009 (Friday) 6:00 p.m.
February 28, 2009 (Saturday) 7:00 a.m.
March 1, 2009 (Sunday) 6:00 a.m.
Macrh 2, 2009 (Monday) 6:00 p.m. (Cemetery)
Macrh 3, 2009 (Tuesday) 6:00 p.m.

On the final day, Wednesday, March 4, 2009 Mass will be said at 6:00 a.m. at Kristo Rai Church in Garapan.

***From*: Jesus M. Mettao and the Family**

Yeoh says 'Slumdog' critics should lighten up

By MIN LEE
AP ENTERTAINMENT WRITER

HONG KONG (AP)—One of Asia's top actresses on Tuesday defended Oscar winner "Slumdog Millionaire" against criticism that the film glossed over the reality of life in the slums of Mumbai.

Former Bond girl Michelle Yeoh—who worked with "Slumdog" director Danny Boyle on the 2007 sci-fi movie "Sunshine"—said the film was a fairy tale and shouldn't be confused with what life is actually like for India's poor.

"I've been to Mumbai," Yeoh said at a news conference promoting the Asian Film Awards. "The harsh reality of the place is such that there are certain places where it's horrible."

She said Boyle had to make "Slumdog Millionaire" upbeat because the true story of what it is like to live in a slum wouldn't have appealed to audiences.

"I don't think anybody could sit through a movie like that, where it just tugs at your heartstrings the whole time," she said.

"Slumdog Millionaire," which won eight Oscars on Sunday, including best film and best director, follows the journey of Jamal, who witnesses his mother's violent death, endures police torture and betrayal by his brother, while single-mindedly hoping to reunite with the lost love of his childhood.

Jamal's story unfolds through flashbacks as he recalls how he came to know the answers that made him a champion on India's version of "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire."

"It's a fairy tale story. What are the odds something like that can happen? But that is the magic of filmmaking. So I am so proud of Danny," Yeoh said.

Yeoh, who started her career in Hong Kong but moved on to roles in Hollywood, also held up "Slumdog Millionaire" as an example of how Asian filmmakers can collaborate with their Western counterparts.

"That was a very Indian theme, but it was done by an English director. However, nowadays the film world is global. We should not say, 'This is only ours.' We should work together, share the technology, share the intellectual property, share the talent," Yeoh said.

Boyle himself has described the low-budget production as a merger of India's prolific Bollywood movie industry, which provided most of the cast and crew, and the global marketing reach of Hollywood, which turned the film into a commercial smash.

Malaysian actress Michelle Yeoh beams during a news conference of the Asian Film Awards in Hong Kong Tuesday, Feb. 24, 2009.

AP

THE HOLLYWOOD BRIEF

Showing more than acting skill

By RACHEL ABRAMOWITZ
(C) 2009, LOS ANGELES TIMES

LOS ANGELES TIMES

Marisa Tomei and Kate Winslet have both spent a fair amount of time naked in front of the camera and they both have Oscar nominations. So why is naked the new Hollywood taboo for anyone younger than 25?

HOLLYWOOD—Take 26.

That's the shot director Darren Aronofsky used of Marisa Tomei in one of "The Wrestler's" pivotal dance sequences, one in which the 44-year-old Academy Award nominee (and previous winner) gyrates and prances, flaunts and slinks—largely in the nude—across a real New Jersey club called Cheeques.

That combination of Aronofsky's persistence paired with the time constraints of an indie film budget didn't allow for Tomei to have much reluctance about baring all. "It was just fast and furious," she says, "and there was no room for being shy or for niceties. (The character's) comfortability has to become my comfortability. The diving in needed to happen."

Tomei isn't the only Oscar nominee this year who shed her clothes for the part. Kate Winslet's haunting performance as the enigmatic Hanna Schmitz in "The Reader" involved extensive nudity, sparking one critic to fume that her nakedness trivialized the Holocaust.

In fact, Winslet would appear to have no equal among A-list actresses in her fearlessness about displaying her body. Stretching from her career-making role in "Titanic" to "Iris" to 2006's steamy "Little Children"—each of which garnered an Oscar nomination for her—Winslet has bared at least some skin in service to the film's story. The uninhibited, brainy actress has no compunction about doing what's necessary for the part, or as she told People recently, "I'm a pretty ballsy chick."

And when the nudity works so integrally into the film, the academy often takes notice. Consider that Halle Berry and Holly Hunter also won their Oscars in recent years for their naked performances—both physically and emotionally—in "Monster's Ball" and "The Piano," respectively. As have other actresses before them.

Ever since films such as Louis Malle's tale of adultery "The Lovers" shocked and scandalized Americans in the Eisenhower '50s, says UCLA film professor Vivian Sobchack, European films and their descendant, American art-house cinema, have had more leeway in terms of audience acceptance of nudity "because of the gravity of the subject matter in many cases." And over time, that nudity has grown more explicit. Back then, Sobchack says, "it was things that if you look at today you wouldn't call nudity. It's part of their buttocks. Today, we're really talking about full-frontal nudity most of the time."

But even as the popular culture has grown ever more sexualized and coarse, many of today's hot young actresses are becoming more reluctant than ever to do on-screen nudity. The prime culprit behind this sudden decorum? Mostly, it's due to Internet sites such as MrSkin that itemize and chronicle every peek of bare skin, every flash of a breast for consumers to watch over and over again out of the context of the film.

Every day, actresses such as Jessica Alba, Scarlett Johansson and Eliza Dushku seem to be swearing off nudity like teenagers joining abstinence clubs. Natalie Portman summed up their collective exasperation in discussing her nude scene in the arty Wes Anderson short "Hotel Chevalier." "I'm not prudish about nudity," she told MTV. "I think it's beautiful in films, and sex is such a big part of life. But my picture ended up on porn sites, and that's the dilemma."

So while a nude scene may be completely integral to a film, once on the Internet, the clip simply becomes naked celebrity footage. "It's no longer part of a performance inside a film that comes and goes. It can be pulled off, owned, redistributed, relooked at for purposes that were never intended in the original performance," notes Wesleyan professor Jeanine Basinger, author of "The Star Machine."

But the stakes are often different for actresses over 40, whose strategic nakedness can be part of a rebranding effort to remind viewers, and Hollywood executives, that the actress is still alluring.

Although Jennifer Aniston, for example, has sicced her lawyers on anyone caught posting naked film clips of her online, the actress posed wearing only a necktie on the January cover of GQ, which hit newsstands just before her 40th birthday. At 52, Kim Cattrall proffered her nude body as a sushi platter in last year's "Sex and the City" movie. And while Tomei's stripper role is in a dramatic art film, her lithe figure hasn't gone unremarked upon. "She's aging," Sobchack said. "She's not the status of Kate Winslet and doing that role. Apart from the fact that it's a great role, she was able to show off this incredible body and say, `Hey, I'm still here.' "

While Tomei received an Oscar for the 1993 comedy "My Cousin Vinny," other memorable roles—"Before the Devil Knows You're Dead" and her Oscar-nominated performance in "In the Bedroom"—often suggest a kind of scrappy fragility, a sensuous woman somehow at the mercy of men. Tomei sees the nudity used in this case as more in the European strain, a throwback to filmmaking of the '70s and a link to an older generation of actresses who also appeared naked and sensual in their 40s—such as Oscar winners Jane Fonda in "Coming Home" and Helen Mirren in "The Cook, the Thief, His Wife & Her Lover."

Although Hollywood has long fetishized strippers and their kissing cousins, prostitutes, in such films as "Klute" and "Pretty Woman," Tomei's role of Cassidy was written more to act as a kind of mirror image of Mickey Rourke's washed-up wrestler, an aging woman at the end of her game with an outre public persona, a mask, by which she earns her livelihood. Ironically, Cassidy's nakedness is her disguise.

To prepare, Tomei interviewed exotic dancers and discovered women determinedly disengaging intellectually and emotionally from their work. "It's part of that mind-set of being constantly in service, to not know your own self really well. It's not like they exposed themselves to me," says Tomei, noting she learned more from their "non-exposure. ... It's a painful place to be, with the mask."

When she was younger, she says, she insisted on a body double when a role called for nudity. But then she so badly wanted the part of the perfidious wife in the 2007 thriller "Before the Devil Knows You're Dead" that she agreed with director Sidney Lumet's insistence that it required explicit nudity.

"I trusted Sidney. I trusted his taste, and that was a requirement of the role, and I wanted to work with him enough that I was willing to take that leap of faith," says Tomei, whose nakedness in that film includes a graphic sex scene with co-star Philip Seymour Hoffman that is intentionally off-putting.

Aronofsky, too, had been adamant about using explicit nakedness. "It has to be so real," Tomei remembers him saying.

So, has she found a new direction for her career?

"I happened to get offered `The Wrestler' after I did that movie. It's another twist of fate," she says, then adds sardonically, "It's not like I'm in my nude phase now."

Schwarzenegger to play himself in Stallone film

SACRAMENTO, Calif. (AP)—Art will imitate life when Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger spends a few hours playing himself later this year in a movie by Sylvester Stallone.

In this photo provided by ABC News, California Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger talks with George Stephanopoulos on This Week with George Stephanopoulos on Sunday, Feb. 22, 2009 at the Newseum in Washington. AP

Stallone's publicist, Sheryl Main, revealed more details Tuesday of Schwarzenegger's rare big-screen appearance. The governor said he has done just three cameos for friends since becoming governor in 2003.

Shooting on the film, "The Expendables," will begin March 28 in Brazil and move to New Orleans for two months. Main says the governor will shoot his scene in Los Angeles.

His role will be a familiar one: California governor.

Stallone writes, directs and stars in the movie, a film about a group of mercenaries trying to overthrow a South American dictator. It also stars Jet Li, Dolph Lundgren, Eric Roberts, Mickey Rourke and Forest Whitaker.

Just a joke: Cowell has no deep-freeze plan

LOS ANGELES (AP)—A spokeswoman for Simon Cowell says reports that the "American Idol" judge wants to be frozen after death are greatly exaggerated.

Cowell was making a tongue-in-cheek remark at a dinner in London two weeks ago with British Prime Minister Gordon Brown and other guests, spokeswoman Lisa Dallos said Tuesday

But the cryogenics comment that Dallos said was meant as a joke was trumpeted in a number of news reports as a serious plan by Cowell, a music industry executive and TV producer ("America's Got Talent," Britain's "The X Factor").

Television personality Simon Cowell poses on the press line at the Elton John Academy Award viewing and after party in West Hollywood, Calif. on Sunday, Feb. 22, 2009. AP

Richter, O'Brien to reunite on 'Tonight Show'

LOS ANGELES (AP)—NBC says Andy Richter and Conan O'Brien will be back together again on late-night TV.

In this Jan. 17, 2007 file photo, Andy Richter of "Andy Barker P.I." arrives at the NBC Winter Press Tour all-star party in Pasadena, Calif. AP

Richter, who worked with O'Brien for seven years on NBC's "Late Night," will become the "Tonight" show announcer when O'Brien takes over from Jay Leno as host in June. NBC said Richter also will take part in comedy bits.

O'Brien called Richter a friend and one of the funniest people he knows, but couldn't resist a joke: O'Brien said he's looking forward to their reunion because Richter owes him $300.

After leaving "Late Night" in 2000, Richter starred in the TV series "Andy Richter Controls the Universe" and "Andy Barker, P.I.," and appeared in "Talladega Nights," "Blades of Glory" and other movies.

Patridge posts burglary video

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Audrina Patridge is sharing video from a different kind of tense life episode: a break-in at her house.

The star of "The Hills" posted surveillance video Tuesday on her blog of the break in, which police said was reported Monday.

The footage shows a young man and woman, apparently aware of at least one camera, running around her Hollywood hills home in the dark. Patridge was not home at the time.

She blogged Tuesday that the robbery was "pretty devastating," but that most of the items taken are replaceable. She asks anyone with information to call police.

Video surveillance played a role when $2 million in jewelry was stolen from Paris Hilton's Sherman Oaks home was last December. No suspect has been caught in that case.

Britney Spears' ex faces assault charge

In this Sept. 7, 2008 file photo, Britney Spears is seen at the 2008 MTV Video Music Awards held at the Paramount Pictures Studio Lot in Los Angeles. AP

LOS ANGELES (AP)—Prosecutors have charged Britney Spears' former boyfriend, Adnan Ghalib, with three felonies including assault with a deadly weapon.

Ghalib allegedly struck a process server with his car outside his apartment on Jan. 30. The server was attempting to deliver papers notifying him that Britney Spears' father and attorneys were seeking a restraining order against him.

According to a news release, the process server clung to the hood of Ghalib's car to avoid being pinned and broke his wrist. The 36-year-old paparazzo, who has not yet been arrested, also faces battery and hit-and-run charges.

A current phone number for Ghalib could not be located. He did not appear for a Monday hearing on the restraining order.

Unemployed woman is forgotten by friends, former co-workers

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN
FROM UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

Dear Abby

DEAR ABBY: In this day of massive cutbacks and layoffs, please remind your readers that people who have recently lost their jobs need their friends now more than ever.

Having found myself in this situation, I know firsthand that people I thought were my friends truly are not. The phone calls and e-mails stopped almost immediately when word got out that I was laid off. Being treated as if I have some sort of contagious disease has been as bad as losing my job. I know what happened to me is a sign of the times and no reflection on me.

So—to all of you who have chosen to no longer communicate with me because of my employment status: I am fine. I have a positive attitude. This will not keep me down. I realize that my possibilities are endless. However badly you treat me now, when you are in the same situation, I will be there for you.

To the wonderful man in my life, thank you for standing by me and giving me daily encouragement. To my family, whom I worship beyond belief, thank you for your understanding and continued support. You have made me the person I am, and because of you, I will succeed.

UNEMPLOYED ... NOT DOWN AND OUT

DEAR NOT DOWN AND OUT: Thank you for so eloquently pointing out that people who have lost their jobs should not be abandoned, and that the support of friends and family is crucial.

Although family relationships are our primary source of emotional support, the relationships we form at work and our work-related contacts can become like an extended second family.

If these relationships are treated as expendable, it can often be as traumatic as the death of a loved one. When a death occurs, there can be as many as five distinct stages of grief. These are anger, denial, bargaining, depression and acceptance. However, when it comes to job loss, there is also the added element of fear.

This is why I am appealing to you, my readers. No one can ignore the fact that times have grown uncertain. Millions of good, hardworking individuals have lost their jobs through no fault of their own. More bad news may be on the way.

Now is the time for all of us to reach out a hand to encourage and help one another. People who are unemployed should not be made to feel they have been discarded. There is strength in numbers. We will all be stronger if we stand together and observe the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.

LOVE, ABBY

■ ■ ■ ■

DEAR ABBY: My husband and I are occasionally invited out to eat at expensive restaurants by a couple with whom we are friendly. The problem is the wife never fails to complain about the food. It's the wrong meal, it was prepared incorrectly, it wasn't what she ordered, etc. Even after her demands have been catered to, she continues to complain throughout the entire meal.

It is embarrassing to see the wait staff treated this way. We have become hesitant about joining them, but out of fear of hurting their feelings, we go. Then we regret having had to spend so much money and having been embarrassed once again.

What should we say the next time we are invited? Should we tell the truth or make up an excuse?

EMBARRASSED IN OHIO

DEAR EMBARRASSED: The next time you are invited to join them, tell the woman you have "other plans." (It's true. You "plan" not to be embarrassed again.) If, after repeated refusals, the woman asks if there is "something wrong," tell her exactly what you have told me. Her behavior is boorish and a bid for attention.

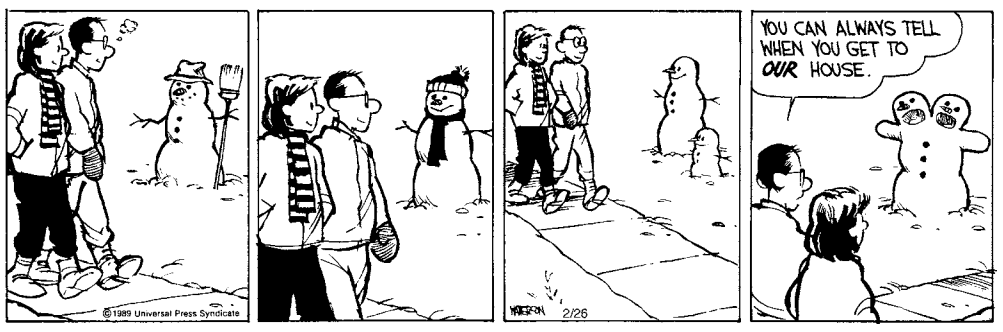
Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable—and most frequently requested—poems and essays, send a business-sized, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for $6 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included in the price.)

Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson



Garfield®

By Jim Davis

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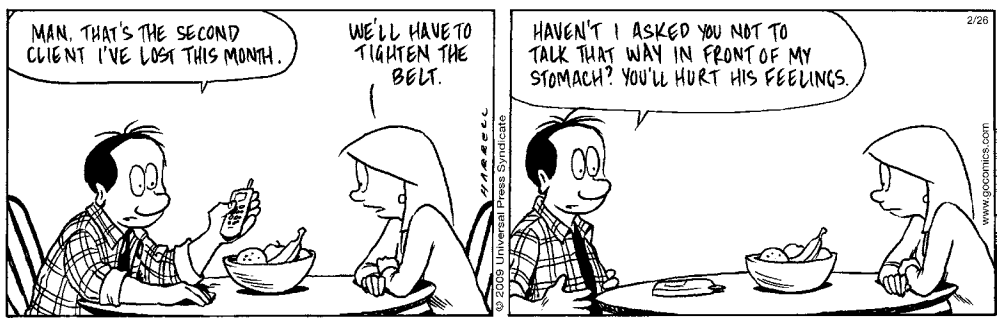
Text GARFIELD to 22646 US ONLY
WANT A LICK?
IT'S TUNA RIPPLE
Distributed by Universal Press Syndicate
JIM DAVIS 2-26

Adam@home

By Bryan Basset


MAN, THAT'S THE SECOND CLIENT I'VE LOST THIS MONTH.
WE'LL HAVE TO TIGHTEN THE BELT.
HAVEN'T I ASKED YOU NOT TO TALK THAT WAY IN FRONT OF MY STOMACH? YOU'LL HURT HIS FEELINGS.
2/26
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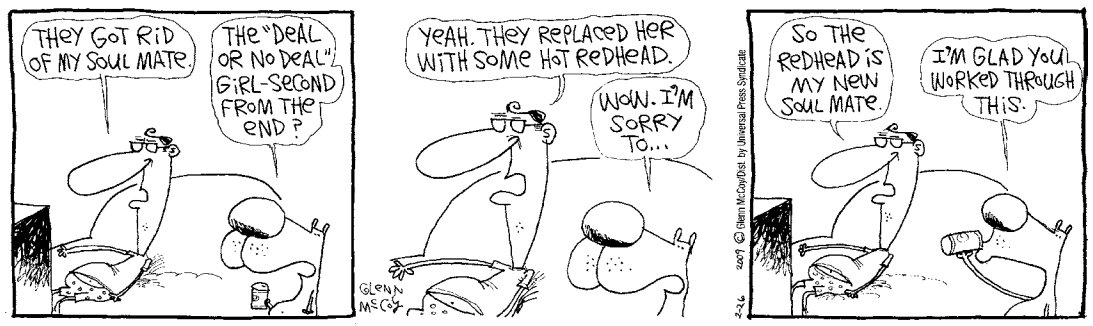
The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy


THEY GOT RID OF MY SOUL MATE.
THE "DEAL OR NO DEAL" GIRL-SECOND FROM THE END?
YEAH. THEY REPLACED HER WITH SOME HOT REDHEAD.
WOW. I'M SORRY TO...
SO THE REDHEAD IS MY NEW SOUL MATE.
I'M GLAD YOU WORKED THROUGH THIS.
GLENN McCOY
2-26 © Glenn McCoy/Dist. by Universal Press Syndicate

CROSSWORD

By Eugene Sheffer

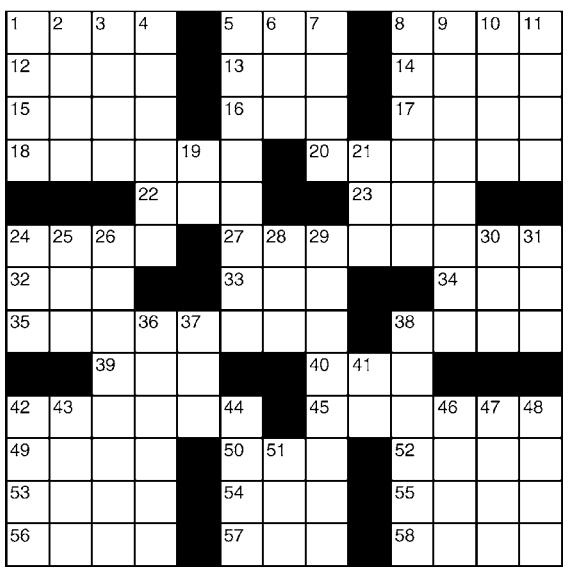
ACROSS
1 Send forth
5 Grier or Dawber
8 Feds
12 A-line creator
13 Mimic
14 Wash
15 Con
16 Revolver
17 Curved molding
18 Unhealthful atmosphere
20 Ascending
22 Heavy weight
23 Tasseled topper
24 Hipsters' jargon
27 Engrave
32 Oklahoma city
33 Peeples or Vardalos
34 Gist
35 Overwhelming
38 Predicate part
39 Exist
40 "Eureka!"
42 Money-back deal
45 Tidbit
49 Object of worship (Var.)
50 Bill's partner
52 Nastase of tennis lore
53 Teller's companion
54 That girl
55 Have coming
56 Vortex
57 Raw rock
58 Coloring agents

DOWN
1 Mild yellow cheese
2 Revealing fashion
3 Greek vowel
4 Sad, on the Seine
5 Violin virtuoso Niccolo
6 "Simpsons" storekeeper
7 Carte
8 Brooding, angry look
9 Periodical
10 Always
11 Requisite
19 Collins of "MADtv"
21 Cpl.'s subordinate
24 Boxing tactic
25 Altar affirmative
26 Tramp
28 Diarist Anais
29 Native American leader
30 Plant sticker
31 Recede
36 "Beverly Hillbillies" role
37 Permit
38 Heterogeneous
41 Crooner Don
42 Mature
43 Supplemented, with "out"
44 Reverberate
46 Dispatch a dragon
47 Green land
48 Photog's choice
51 "— the fields we go"

Solution time: 25 mins.

P	O	L	S	■	A	I	M	■	O	H	M	S
E	X	I	T	■	D	N	A	■	N	E	A	P
C	E	R	E	M	O	N	Y	■	A	G	U	E
K	N	A	V	E	■	■	S	H	I	E	L	D
■	■	■	I	N	C	A	■	A	R	M	■	■
J	A	P	E	■	O	V	A	L	■	O	H	O
A	L	A	■	T	R	O	U	T	■	N	E	W
B	E	L	■	U	N	I	T	■	H	Y	M	N
■	■	I	O	N	■	D	O	L	E	■	■	■
R	O	M	P	E	R	■	■	E	R	N	I	E
A	L	O	E	■	A	N	T	I	M	O	N	Y
F	I	N	N	■	C	O	W	■	A	P	S	E
T	O	Y	S	■	E	G	O	■	N	E	T	S

Yesterday's answer 2-26



STUMPED? For answers to today's crossword, call **1-900-226-5955**! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Erykah Badu, 38; Jennifer Grant, 42; Mark Dacascos, 45; Michael Bolton, 55

Happy Birthday: If you can keep everyone around you guessing, you have a far greater chance of accomplishing your goals without interruption or intervention. Turn additional responsibilities into a learning experience. With an open mind and heart, you can accomplish what you strive for in the future. Your numbers are 2, 5, 12, 28, 32, 39, 47

ARIES (*March 21-April 19*): Take control if you want to be successful. An unexpected expense may set you back if you haven't put some cash aside. Someone from your past will make an impact on your life now. ✪✪✪

TAURUS (*April 20-May 20*): Someone you least expect to cover your back will be there for you. Appreciation will ensure an ally in the future. Disappointment in someone you know well will be an eye-opener. Don't overreact. ✪✪✪✪

GEMINI (*May 21-June 20*): Someone is likely to take advantage of your openness and willingness to share by using your ideas as his or her own. When it comes to launching what you want to do next, the element of surprise will lead to your success. ✪✪

CANCER (*June 21-July 22*): Put things in perspective. Just because you are taken with someone's bubbly personality doesn't mean you should let this person take advantage of you. Consider how you can do what's being asked of you in such a way that it benefits you. ✪✪✪✪✪

LEO (*July 23-Aug. 22*): Be careful what you take on financially. Responsibilities will cause you to question your future and your current status. Take time out to ease your stress by engaging in something you enjoy. ✪✪✪

VIRGO (*Aug. 23-Sept. 22*): Make your decisions based on logic, not emotions. Concentrate on the present and forget past misfortunes. You can only move forward once you realize that it's what you do now that counts. ✪✪✪

LIBRA (*Sept. 23-Oct. 22*): Let your inhibitions go and prepare to have some romantic fun. Take things as they come and enjoy the moment you are in. Self-improvement will come easy and feeling good about who you are and where you are heading will be the result of the changes you make. ✪✪✪

SCORPIO (*Oct. 23-Nov. 21*): It will be vital that you bring about a few changes if you want to finish what you've been working on for so long. Let some of the people you have been connected to in the past go, in order to clear the way for new friendships, partnerships and beginnings. ✪✪✪

SAGITTARIUS (*Nov. 22-Dec. 21*): You will bring on unexpected changes before someone else does, causing you to lose your footing. Compensation may be necessary. A passionate encounter will motivate you to move forward. ✪✪

CAPRICORN (*Dec. 22-Jan. 19*): Do what you do for a good reason and not because someone is nagging you to do so. Weigh whether or not the relationships in your life are beneficial. You must move forward with your plans. Your money and your reputation are at risk. ✪✪✪✪

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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AQUARIUS (*Jan. 20-Feb. 18*): Your inquisitive mind will lead to an interesting meeting with someone who sparks your enthusiasm. A new direction, profession or game plan can be put into play. Educational pursuits will turn out to be an excellent choice, leading you on a journey that will change your life. ✪✪✪

PISCES (*Feb. 19-March 20*): Stop running in circles when all you really have to do is reassess your position and strategize what needs to be done. It's actions, not big talk that will get you what you want. Uncertainty will lead to your demise. ✪✪✪

Birthday Baby: You are a doer and a contributor. You are unique, aggressive and unafraid of the unknown. You are an organizer.

Eugenia's Web sites: ***astroadvice.com*** *for fun,* ***eugenialast.com*** *for confidential consultations*

SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku *By Dave Green*

1								
9		6	1					
		2	7		3		4	
	1					8		5
			8		4			
2		3					1	
	6		5		9	7		
					8	2		6
								3

Difficulty Level ★★★ 2/26

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer

4	6	5	9	7	2	1	3	8
3	1	2	8	4	6	7	9	5
9	7	8	3	5	1	6	4	2
6	2	1	7	8	3	4	5	9
7	3	4	5	1	9	8	2	6
5	8	9	2	6	4	3	1	7
8	9	6	4	3	5	2	7	1
2	4	7	1	9	8	5	6	3
1	5	3	6	2	7	9	8	4

Difficulty Level ★★★ 2/25

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WONDERWORD®

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and **CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD.** The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

CLEANING CARPET STAINS **Solution: 7 letters**

P	D	D	H	N	K	M	E	S	S	Y	A	N	S	R
E	R	O	T	E	R	T	O	W	E	L	I	A	O	S
R	I	O	O	A	A	O	R	O	D	U	N	D	W	P
M	N	F	L	(T)	M	E	B	E	R	I	O	C	I	O
A	K	E	C	(O)	S	T	L	B	T	G	M	O	N	T
N	S	A	L	(L)	C	I	E	A	U	U	M	F	E	L
E	A	U	O	(B)	O	D	R	U	U	T	A	F	N	E
N	S	P	D	S	U	Y	E	C	D	F	S	E	I	S
T	D	A	P	S	R	L	A	T	P	I	P	E	T	S
R	I	I	E	L	A	V	O	M	E	R	S	A	S	R
A	L	R	R	R	Y	U	K	S	E	R	I	E	I	A
F	O	L	E	T	G	C	S	T	D	N	G	N	R	E
F	S	H	I	H	E	C	A	F	R	U	S	E	P	M
I	Y	A	R	P	S	W	S	P	R	E	A	D	N	S
C	W	A	S	H	S	D	I	S	I	N	F	E	C	T

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Yesterday's Answer: Moutya

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Wade's big night leads Heat past Detroit

MIAMI (AP)—Not only did Dwyane Wade continue his run of career highs, he sent the Detroit Pistons to a new low.

Wade scored 31 points and set a personal best with 16 assists, leading the Miami Heat to a 103-91 win and handing the Pistons their seventh straight loss—Detroit's longest slide in more than seven years.

Daequan Cook scored 16 points, Jermaine O'Neal added 14 and Jamario Moon added 12 for the Heat, who took control with a 22-8 run to close the third quarter and held on from there.

Allen Iverson scored 22 points and Tayshaun Prince added 18 for the Pistons (27-28), who fell under .500 this late in a season for the first time since 2000-01.

Michael Beasley scored 11 points and Udonis Haslem finished with 10 points and 11 rebounds for Miami. Antonio McDyess shot 8-for-10 and scored 17 for Detroit.

Playing for the first time since Sunday's career-best 50-point outburst at Orlando, Wade missed his first four shots before getting on track. He had his 70th career double-double before the third quarter was done and finished 11-for-20 from the field, getting 10 points in the final 12 minutes to keep Miami in front.

His jumper with 2:02 left gave Miami a 98-87 lead, sealing the outcome that provided the Heat with a much-needed boost in the Eastern Conference playoff race.

Miami (30-26), which has now doubled last season's win total with 26 games still to play, moved within two games of idle Atlanta for fourth in the Eastern Conference.

Specialist Glenn Carel works on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange Tuesday, Feb. 24, 2009. AP

Detroit (27-28) fell into a tie for sixth in the East with Philadelphia, and needs to win in New Orleans on Wednesday to avoid matching the franchise's longest skid since 1995.

The key for Miami was defense in the third quarter, which finally got the Heat some breathing room.

Iverson's layup with 9:05 left in the third put Detroit on top 60-58. The Pistons proceeded to miss 12 of their 13 shots over the remainder of the period, with only six free throws in the final seven minutes of the quarter keeping Detroit within striking distance.

McDyess' three-point play with 10 minutes left got Detroit within 82-76, but the Pistons got no closer. Wade scored Miami's next three points, then found Cook for a 3-pointer that restored a 10-point lead.

Miami outrebounded Detroit 44-34 - an impressive stat, considering the Heat had been outrebounded by an average of 18 in their last three games.

Cavaliers 94, Grizzlies 79

At Cleveland, Daniel Gibson scored 19 points and Mo Williams added 18, leading Cleveland over Memphis.

The Cavaliers never trailed, making for a relatively easy night for LeBron James, the NBA's second-leading scorer. James scored 15 points in 30 minutes and didn't play the fourth quarter, thanks to Cleveland's big lead throughout the game.

Rudy Gay and Hakim Warrick scored 13 points apiece for Memphis, which lost its fifth straight.

Rockets 98, Trail Blazers 94

At Houston, Ron Artest scored 21 points, Aaron Brooks had 20 and Houston moved past Portland in the Western Conference standings by beating the Trail Blazers.

Luis Scola had 15 points and 11 rebounds—his fifth straight double-double — for the Rockets, who came in trailing Portland by a half-game for fourth place in the West.

Brandon Roy scored 24 and LaMarcus Aldridge added 21 points with eight rebounds for the Blazers, who've lost nine of their last 10 games in Houston.

Spurs 93, Mavericks 76

At San Antonio, Tony Parker had 37 points and 12 assists with All-Star teammate Tim Duncan sitting out with a sore right knee, and short-handed San Antonio held Dallas to its worst offensive showing this season.

Parker scored 26 points in the first half and shouldered the load without Duncan and Manu Ginobili, who hasn't played since the All-Star break because of a stress reaction in his right ankle.

Michael Finley scored 16 against his former team, and Josh Howard led the flat-looking Mavericks with 19 points.

Raptors 118, Timberwolves 100

At Toronto, Chris Bosh and Andrea Bargnani each scored 26 points, Anthony Parker had 24, and Toronto beat Minnesota for the 10th consecutive time.

Jose Calderon had 15 points and 13 assists for Toronto, with Jason Kapono adding 11 points and Shawn Marion 10.

Randy Foye scored 25 and Ryan Gomes had 23 for the Timberwolves, who have lost 11 of 13.

Kevin Love had 11 points in the first quarter but finished with just 15, while Mike Miller had 12 rebounds for Minnesota.

Lakers 107, Thunder 93

At Oklahoma City, Kobe Bryant scored 10 of his 36 points in a 3-minute span of the fourth quarter to thwart an Oklahoma City rally and lead Los Angeles.

Bryant moved into 19th place on the NBA's career scoring list, moving ahead of Adrian Dantley only one game after he passed Elgin Baylor for 20th. Entering the game, he had needed only 13 points to tie Dantley.

Kevin Durant scored 32 to lead Oklahoma City in its sixth straight loss.

Bulls 120, Magic 102

At Chicago, Derrick Rose scored 22 points and Chicago got strong efforts from its three newcomers in a victory over Orlando.

The three Bulls acquired at the trade deadline combined for 37 points in their home debuts. Tim Thomas scored 17 points, John Salmons 11 and Brad Miller had nine points, seven rebounds and five assists.

The Bulls shot a season-high 56.5 percent, scoring the most points of a Magic opponent this season.

The Magic, who overcame Dwyane Wade's 50-point effort in a win Monday, trailed almost the entire way. Dwight Howard led Orlando with 26 points and 12 rebounds. Hedo Turkoglu had 16 points and Courtney Lee 14.

Suns 112, Bobcats 102

At Phoenix, Steve Nash scored 22 points despite leaving with an ankle injury and Phoenix beat Charlotte to spoil the return of Boris Diaw and Raja Bell to US Airways Center.

This was the first time Diaw and Bell had returned to Phoenix since being traded to Charlotte two months ago. They combined to almost upset the Suns.

Diaw finished with a season-high 27 points, along with nine rebounds and six assists. Bell scored 23 with three rebounds and three assists.

Knicks finally waive Stephon Marbury, ending bumpy stint

NEW YORK (AP)—The New York Knicks are free of Stephon Marbury, and the troublesome point guard is free to join a playoff contender. Marbury was waived Tuesday by the Knicks, ending a turbulent five-year stint in which the former All-Star couldn't lead his hometown team to a single playoff victory.

The team released a statement saying an agreement between the Knicks and Marbury had been reached, but did not disclose financial terms. Knicks president Donnie Walsh has said the team and Marbury have been trying to work out a buyout.

Walsh's hope was to get something for Marbury in a trade, but with Marbury's salary of close to $21 million this season and a divisive personality, he knew a deal was improbable.

Marbury would be eligible to play in the postseason for any team that signs him because he was waived by March 1. He has been linked to the Boston Celtics, who are in need of a backup guard with Tony Allen injured.

"The Celtics are focused on defending our championship and are working day and night to finalize our playoff roster," owner Wyc Grousbeck said. "We don't have anything to announce at this point except that we intend to do everything we can to raise Banner 18."

Though perhaps the most talented player on the roster, Marbury hadn't played in a game this season as new coach Mike D'Antoni preferred to stick with the players who would be part of the Knicks' future. He never gave the temperamental guard a chance to cause the same troubles for him that he did for Larry Brown and Isiah Thomas.

The Knicks' statement also said Marbury's grievance against the Knicks had been resolved. The sides attended an arbitration hearing earlier Tuesday regarding the nearly $400,000 in salary the team had docked the point guard after alleging he refused D'Antoni's request to play in a game in Detroit in November when the team was short-handed.

He then publicly criticized D'Antoni and said he could never play for the coach because he didn't trust him. Marbury sought his departure soon after that episode, but hadn't met face-to-face with Walsh since Dec. 1, when he left a meeting after just 20 minutes because they weren't close on a buyout agreement.

Marbury had previously refused to surrender more than $1 million of the remaining $20.8 million on his contract. It's unclear what he gave up Tuesday to secure his release.

The Celtics and Miami Heat are the teams that are most frequently mentioned as possible destinations. Whatever team signs Marbury will get a player who hasn't played in a regular-season game in more than a year.

Walsh acknowledged being concerned about Marbury joining a team that the Knicks could face down the line. The Knicks could have held onto him past the deadline, but Walsh said Monday he preferred to work out an arrangement that benefitted both sides.

"You want to do the right thing," he said, "by the player and you. I mean the team."

Marbury, a Brooklyn native and New York schoolboy star, was long a crowd favorite following his return home in a trade with Phoenix in January 2004. But his departure had been expected for months after he alienated Knicks management, teammates and fans last season, the worst of his career.

Before posting his poorest offensive numbers, he drew criticism for both his erratic behavior in a televised interview, and his testimony about a sexual encounter with a team intern during a sexual harassment trial against Thomas and MSG.

The season had barely started when Marbury ditched the team in Phoenix following a spat with Thomas, sending the Knicks into a downward spiral from which they never recovered. He scored a career-worst 13.9 points per game, nearly six below his average, while playing in only 24 games, his fewest since entering the NBA as the No. 4 pick of the 1996 draft.

He had a long absence in December following the death of his father, then had season-ending ankle surgery in January.

There was speculation the Knicks would cut Marbury over the summer, but Walsh told him to come back in great shape, which he did. However, the Knicks began planning for Marbury's departure in July, when they signed Chris Duhon and said he would compete for the starting point guard job.

But there never was a competition. Duhon was the starter from the opening of training camp, with Marbury making only one start—as a small forward—in the preseason. He didn't play in the season opener, a surprise since he played so well in exhibition games, then had been inactive in the remaining games before Walsh ordered him to stay away from the team following the failed Dec. 1 meeting.

D'Antoni's explanation for refusing to use Marbury was that he had too much stature as a two-time All-Star and former Olympian to be given spotty minutes as a backup. More likely, he was simply looking to avoid the public feuds that Marbury engaged with under both Brown and Thomas.

D'Antoni briefly had Marbury in Phoenix before the Suns traded Marbury to the Knicks in January 2004, a deal that cleared the cap space necessary for them to sign Steve Nash that summer and become one of the league's top teams.

Things didn't work out nearly as well for the Knicks.

That trade was Thomas' first big move, coming just two weeks after he was hired as Knicks president. Marbury helped lead New York to the playoffs that season, but the Knicks were swept by New Jersey in the first round and haven't been back since.

Marbury has never won a playoff series, part of the reason he is considered a poor team player despite his numerous individual talents. He will likely get another shot now.

Colts release veteran receiver Marvin Harrison

INDIANAPOLIS (AP)—Marvin Harrison can play wherever he wants now. In Indianapolis, he will always be a Colt. Team owner Jim Irsay on Tuesday grudgingly honored Harrison's request to be released, a move that becomes official Wednesday. Team officials turned the news conference to announce Harrison's release - the receiver didn't attend - into an emotional tribute to one of the most identifiable players in the franchise's Indianapolis era.

They took turns recounting stories that stretched back more than a decade. Irsay's halting words at the start and team president Bill Polian's reddened eyes at the end were indicative of how hard it was to let go of one of the best receivers in NFL history.

"I've always treasured the time I've had with him because I respected him so much as a person," Polian said. "He worked so hard at his craft, he was always so prepared and he did every little thing he could to win. And he did it with quiet dignity, superb professionalism and with a sense of contribution to the team, that really is second to none."

Irsay saw the announcement as more of a temporary goodbye than a permanent farewell.

He plans to induct Harrison into the team's Ring of Honor after he retires, and expects Harrison to return to the city where he became a star.

Irsay also wants to re-sign Harrison again, one day, so he can leave the game as a Colts player.

The move was made because Harrison's price tag was too expensive.

Harrison is the second member of the Colts' original triplets—Edgerrin James and Peyton Manning were the others—to depart.

"It will be strange to line up under center and not see No. 88 out on my right," Manning said in a statement issued by the team. "He is a Hall-of-Fame receiver, I am proud to have played with him, and he will always be an Indianapolis Colt in my book."

The 36-year-old receiver would have counted $13.4 million against the cap in 2009, the highest of any NFL receiver. Although Indy wanted to restructure Harrison's contract, Polian said there was no feasible way to do it.

Releasing Harrison saves the Colts about $6 million, with about $7.4 million in prorated bonuses still on the books. With three-time Pro Bowler Reggie Wayne and Anthony Gonzalez ready to make up for Harrison's absence, they couldn't afford the luxury of keeping three former first-round picks.

Over the past two seasons, Harrison hasn't played up to his usual standards.

He missed all but five games in 2007 because of injuries, underwent offseason knee surgery and then caught 60 passes in 2008—less than half of his NFL record 143 in 2002.

Yet Colts coach Jim Caldwell and Polian continued to insist that Harrison hadn't lost a step.

The decision may have been hardest on Irsay, who remembered Harrison as the only remaining player from his early days as owner in 1996, following his father's death.

Before filing the paperwork and publicly announcing the decision, Irsay had a private conversation with Harrison. It was billed as a final effort to get Harrison to stay, but that's not how the discussion went.

"I wanted to make sure Marv and I had a chance to talk this afternoon and really thoroughly go through things together," Irsay said. "I know he wishes to go forward and pursue opportunities in the National Football League and that's something we honor with his release."

Harrison was the Colts' first-round draft pick in 1996, out of Syracuse, and it didn't take long for him to make an impression.

Polian, then with Carolina, called Harrison's personal workout that year the most impressive he's ever seen from a receiver.

Harrison proved better than advertised with his delicate toe-taps and penchant for acrobatic catches. Of the five first-round receivers drafted in '96, Harrison was easily the most productive over the longest period.

He caught 1,102 passes for 14,580 yards and 128 touchdowns—all rank in the NFL's top five. He broke all of the Colts major single-season and career receiving records, most previously held by Hall-of-Famer Raymond Berry, and teamed with Manning to form the most prolific passing duo in league history.

Harrison won a Super Bowl and was selected to eight Pro Bowls.

But it's not the numbers or the accolades Indy fans will remember; it's the moments.

"I'll never forget the catch at Tennessee, which in my mind is the signature play of his career," Polian said. "He was suspended in mid-air, reached out with one hand, hauled it in and then got up and waved the rest of the players down the field. That was quintessential Marvin."

After Manning's arrival in 1998, he spent countless hours trying to get the timing down perfectly with his new quarterback. And when he scored touchdowns, he usually flipped the ball to the official.

Around teammates, he was nearly as quiet as he was with reporters, skipping Tuesday's news conference, Polian said, because he didn't want to slight anyone at the team complex.

"The best way I'd describe him is there's an old saying that goes lead by example and when necessary use words," Caldwell said. "That's what Marvin did. He rarely used words."

Harrison stayed out of the spotlight, refraining for the headline grabbing antics that have made other star receivers famous.

Last year, for the first time, Harrison was involved in some high-profile off-the-field trouble.

Philadelphia police believe one of Harrison's guns was used in an April shooting in his hometown. No charges were filed against Harrison, and the man who made the accusation was convicted on a misdemeanor charge of lying to police.

Harrison does not believe his career is finished.

He hopes to sign with another team, possibly as early as Friday when the free-agent market opens.

Polian did not rule out the possibility of bringing Harrison at a lower price, either, though there has already been speculation that Harrison might be interested in playing for the Eagles and reuniting with former college teammate Donovan McNabb.

"I had a chance to reflect on a lot of what has happened over the last 12-plus years," Irsay said. "I really look forward to the time he goes into the Hall of Fame and the Ring of Honor at our stadium."

AP

Indianapolis Colts owner Jim Irsay, left, president Bill Polian and coach Jim Caldwell, right, attend a news conference at which the NFL football team announced the release of receiver Marvin Harrison from his contract, in Indianapolis on Tuesday, Feb. 24, 2009.

Agent: Warner deserves pay of top quarterbacks

By BOB BAUM
AP SPORTS WRITER

The agent for Kurt Warner says he expected the quarterback and the Cardinals would have a contract agreement by now and hopes the team isn't using his client's desire to stay in Arizona against him.

Agent Mark Bartelstein said Warner deserves a salary among the top "four or five" quarterbacks in the league, no matter where he plays. According to Bartelstein, those five earn an average of about $14.5 million per year.

In an interview with The Associated Press Tuesday night, Bartelstein declined to say what the Cardinals were offering.

"It's unfortunate,," Bartelstein said. "I thought it would get done quickly, but it hasn't. We'll keep working on it."

Barring an agreement, Warner will become a free agent on Friday.

In an interview on Sporting News Radio, the 37-year-old quarterback said he was leaning toward either signing with Arizona or retiring.

At this point in his career, Warner said, "you don't want to go and start over, you don't want to have to rebuild. You want to be able to be a part of something you're comfortable with, where the pieces are in place to be successful."

Warner also doesn't want to move his wife and seven children.

His comments add to the leverage the Cardinals have in their negotiations, but Bartelstein said it would be unfair to pay the quarterback less than he deserves just because he wants to stay put.

"I really hope it doesn't get used against him that he's a Cardinal," the agent said.

Cardinals general manager Rod Graves did not return a message left on his cell phone.

Bartelstein downplayed Warner's comments, saying, "things change quickly. ... When the phone rings, you've got to listen."

Warner was a bargain last season, earning about $4 million plus incentives at the controls of a prolific passing game that led the Cardinals on an improbable run to the Super Bowl.

In four playoff games, Warner completed 68 percent of his passes for 1,147 yards and 11 touchdowns, with three interceptions.

Warner wants a deal for two years with a possible option for a third. Both he and his agent were keenly aware that in the current economic downturn there is little public sympathy for an athlete arguing over a few million dollars.

"The last Kurt or I want is for anyone to feel sorry for him," Bartelstein said. "That's not his or my style."

But Warner said that pay is the way an organization can show its commitment to a player and his value to a team.

"My bottom line is I want to keep this team together and I want to have a chance to win a championship and that's the most important thing," Warner said in the radio interview, "and I want to be compensated as well because I know these are probably going to be the last two years I'm going to play."

Bonds' personal trainer expected to remain silent

SAN FRANCISCO (AP)—Barry Bonds' personal trainer is likely to tell a federal judge on Friday that he has no plans to testify at the home run king's trial on charges he when he told a grand jury he didn't knowingly using performance-enhancing drugs.

Greg Anderson had been scheduled to appear before U.S. District Judge Susan Illston on Wednesday to tell her whether he would break his silence. The hearing was postponed until Friday at the request of Anderson's lawyer, Mark Geragos, who is busy with another trial.

The judge granted the request Tuesday.

"Greg and I will be there and I don't expect anything has changed," Geragos said. "I believe Greg is firm in his commitment" to not testify.

Anderson has already spent a year in prison for refusing to testify before a grand jury about his relationship with Bonds. Geragos said he believes the government wants to put Anderson in custody again.

"There is no authority for him to be placed in jail again," Geragos said. "You can't just put people in jail because you want to."

Anderson is key to the government's case as it tries to prove Bonds lied to a grand jury investigating steroid use by athletes. Prosecutors said the trainer can directly link Bonds to three positive drug tests and other evidence collected during a September 2003 raid at the Bay Area Laboratory Co-Operative, which was at the center of the steroids probe.

The judge has barred prosecutors from using that evidence unless Anderson testifies.

Bonds is charged with 10 counts of making false declarations to a grand jury and one count of obstruction of justice. The former San Francisco Giants slugger, who holds the major league record for home runs with 762, has pleaded not guilty. His trial is scheduled to start Monday.

Phelps will return in May at Charlotte UltraSwim

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (AP)—Michael Phelps will swim in a meet in Charlotte in May, ending his three-month suspension for being photographed inhaling from a marijuana pipe.

Meet officials announced Tuesday that the Olympic great has committed to the Charlotte UltraSwim on May 14-17.

The Grand Prix event will be the first major meet for which Phelps is eligible. It will be his first tuneup before July's world championships in Rome.

Phelps won a record eight gold medals at the Beijing Olympics. A British tabloid published a photograph showing him with a marijuana pipe at a party in November at the University of South Carolina. He was suspended by USA Swimming.

Gualo Rai tops Inchcape in Navy Hill caging

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
roselyn_monroyo@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Gualo Rai saved the best for last, outscoring Inchcape in the fourth quarter en route to a 91-85 come-from-behind win at the start of the Masters division of the 2009 Navy Hill Friendship Basketball League Tuesday night at the Garapan Basketball Court.

Gualo Rai outgunned Inchcape in the fourth period, 29-18, to turn a 62-65 deficit in the third quarter to an eight-point win.

Sonny Ranola and Efren Lansang joined forces in leading Gualo Rai's rally in the fourth period firing 11 and nine points, respectively.

The match was tied last at 72-all midway in the fourth canto when Ranola and Lansang caught fire in the 19-11 windup.

Lansang finished with a game-high 31 points, while Ranola chipped in 29 points.

Roy Alcantara and Arman Anasan also contributed double-figure scoring. drilling 11 and 10 points, respectively.

Dante Olivos paced Inchcape with 31 points. He and Amor Casabuena tallied 10 markers apiece in the first perood, giving Inchcape a 23-19 lead.

Inchcape remained on top at halftime, 42-37, as Boy Garcia found his mark in the second period scoring eight of his 14 points in that canto.

In the third quarter, Olivos and Casabuena worked things out for Inchcape, anew, combining for 19 points. The duo traded baskets with Gualo Rai's Lansang and Ranola, who also combined for 19 markers in the third period.

Olivos and Casabuena slowed down a bit in the final quarter, but not Ranola and Lansang, whose consecutive baskets in the payoff period lifted Gualo Rai to a win.

Meanwhile, action in the open division of the Navy Hill caging will continue tonight.

Docomo and Dollar Days are leading the 12-team league with identical 8-1 records.

The Rollers are in second place with a 7-1 slate, followed by KFC/Taco Bell (5-3), Uncle Ben (5-3), MBI (4-3), Inchcape (4-3), IT&E (4-6), San Antonio (2-70, 670 Rollers (1-10), and Mobil (1-10).

Gualo Rai 91 – Lansang 31, Ranola 29, Alcantara 11, Anasan 10, Garon 6, Razon 4.

Inchcape 83 – Olivos 21, Casabuena 27, Garcia 14, Puno 5, Arenas 2, Lopez 2 Conti 1.

Scoring by quarters: 19-23, 37-42, 62-65, 91-83.

D'9ers build up roster for 2009 SML season

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
n_rodriguez@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

With its massive buildup for the recently started 2009 Saipan Major League, D'9ers may pull out a number of surprises this season.

D'9ers opened up its campaign on a bright note last Monday night by overpowering the Tanapag Falcons, 13-3, which was erroneously reported as a Falcons win over the D'9ers.

D'9ers team manager Eliseo "Chel" Tenorio said their first win was so important for the team because it definitely boosted his players' morale especially the new and younger recruits.

"It's important too because I am looking at other teams that are also strong," said Tenorio.

With the win, D'9ers joined defending champion Rock Steady in the early lead following the latter's scary 6-5 victory over the Ford Rangers on Feb. 20.

Last year, D'9ers placed fourth but with several addition from the Senior and Big leagues, Tenorio said the team is looking good.

"We will have a combination of veterans and rookies," he said.

The returnees include Bob Lizama, Juan Acosta, Ben Mesa, Jeff Tenorio, Jonathan Tenorio, and Greg Camacho.

They also acquired the services of pitcher Mel Sakisat and all-star catcher Robert Bansil from the Rangers.

The recruits from the Saipan Little League are Eric Tenorio, Chad Atalig, E.J. Tenorio, and Wally Emul Jr.

They have also added Northern Yankee all-around player Patrick Camacho.

"I am going to rely on our pitching," said Tenorio, referring to the experienced hurlers in Sakisat and Paul Camacho.

D'9ers established an 11-1 lead after four full innings with Paul Camacho at the mound on the way to score the lopsided win over the Falcons.

Belau Masters league meeting tonight

Organizers of the 2009 Belau Masters Slow-pitch Softball League are calling on coaches or managers of interested teams to attend a meeting tonight at 6pm at Minatchom Atdao Pavilion.

Bryan Adelbai said the opening date, rules, and schedule for the Masters league will be discussed at the meeting.

Adelbai added they are looking to kick off the Masters league next month, but the venue has yet to be decided. ***(PR)***

STEROIDS

From Page 28

The policy, which was accepted by the players and owners, was issued at the start of the 2005 season and in November of the same year became even tougher for positive tests.

Under the new rules, a first positive test would result in a 50-game suspension, a second positive test would result in a 100-game suspension, and a third positive test would result in a lifetime suspension from MLB.

On March 30, 2006, Commissioner Bud Selig launched an investigation on the alleged steroid use by players such as Barry Bonds and Gary Sheffield as the weight of books like *Game of Shadows* emerged. The inquiry into steroids' use in baseball is expected to go back no further than 2002, when the MLB started testing players for performance-enhancing drugs.

The latest player who is dragged into the spotlight is no less than the sport's highest-paid player, Alex Rodriguez, who admitted last Feb. 9 that he used a banned substance from 2001 to 2003.

His admission came two days after *Sports Illustrated* reported he was on a list of 104 players who tested positive in the 2003 survey, which was to be confidential.

Royster played for several teams in the MLB among them were the Los Angeles Dodgers, Atlanta Braves, San Diego Padres, Chicago White Sox, and the New York Yankees.

After he retired he became a team manager of Milwaukee Brewers.

Last year, he became the first foreigner to manage a team in the Korea's professional baseball league, Korean Baseball Organization.

Prior to his hiring, the Lotte Giants failed to advance to the playoffs in eight straight seasons.

Royster went on to transform the team into one of the most popular clubs in Korea.

The Giants also finished third overall in the 2008 season with former Yankee Karim Garcia leading the way.

Garcia could not make it to the spring training camp on Saipan because he is currently training for the upcoming World Baseball Classic starting next week in Florida. Garcia will play for Mexico.

Royster's Giants also has three national team members—Lee Dae Ho, Kang Min Ho and Song Sun Joon. The three are currently with the Korean national team in Hawaii preparing for the same tournament.

As far as the Korean Baseball Organization is concerned, Royster believes it is free of illegal drug use.

DUMAPIT

From Page 28

championship of the stepladder finals, 226-198. Talavera earlier advanced to the finals against veteran kegler Kitz Barja, 176-158

Dumapit topped the three-game roll-off after totaling 741 pinfalls built around handicap-aided scores of 248, 268, and 225 for an average of 247.

Barja averaged 227 finished second in the eliminations with a total of 682 (218, 281, 183), while Talavera was third place with an average of 220 after coming up with rounds of 220, 220, and 219 for a total of 659.

Paraiso, for his part, out-dueled Ronald Epan in the championship of the Class B finals by rolling a 231 against Epan's 169. Epan earned the right to face Paraiso in the finals after displacing Ron Cal, 207-175.

Paraiso earlier finished as the No. 1 seed in the Class B roll-off after he averaged 222 pins built around scores of 192, 215, and 260 for a total of 667.

Finishing four pins shy was Epan after he averaged 221 with his total of 663 (174, 218, 271).

Cal rounded out the Top 3 after she tattooed 641 pins in the three-game roll-off (200, 227, 214) for an average of 214.

In Class C, youth bowler McKenzie upset Gloria Omechelang in the finals by the slimmest of margins, 223-220.

McKenzie overcame long odds to win the division. She first beat Joven Abris in the semis, 195-174, to advance to the finals.

Omechelang ruled the three-game roll-off by firing 690 pinfalls (249, 240, 241) for a handicap-aided average of 230.

Abris, who averaged 229, was good for second with a three-round haul of 688 (223, 226, 239), while McKenzie finished an unassuming third with his total of 671 (180, 254, 237).

The Saipan Filipino-American Lions Club Classified Bowling Tournament was sponsored by Tan Holdings' Jerry Tan, JET Holdings' Juan S. Tenorio, Micronesian Brokers, Inc., Dianne Chong, Eli Arago, Lina Dimaano, Jess Delos Santos, and A&L Corporation.

AQUA

From Page 28

Regency Saipan, 100-98, Monday night at the Tinian Municipal Gymnasium.

Ziddy Johanes made a crucial steal and the game-winning basket in the closing seconds of the match to lift Aqua to a 3-0 record and hand Hyatt its first loss in three games.

The match was tied last at 98-all, with 21 seconds left on the clock and with Aqua in possession.

Jun Estolas anchored Aqua's offense, but muffed his attempt. Hyatt's Jericho Cruz then collared the rebound and aimed for a long pass. But Johanes, one of the smallest players on the court, picked off the pass and went for the game-winning basket.

Aqua lead by 12 at halftime, 54-42, as James Camacho waxed hot from outside, firing 18 points.

But Hyatt rallied in the second half behind Chris Arreza and Cruz. Cruz nailed eight markers in the third period moving Hyatt within three, entering the payoff canto, 71-74.

Arreza picked up where Cruz left off in the fourth by drilling 16 markers to keep Hyatt in contention.

Gil Gapor kept Aqua afloat in the fourth, scoring 12 markers, while Estolas earned a living from the free throw line.

But the biggest shot came from Johanes, whose lone basket in the fourth period allowed Aqua to preserve its undefeated record.

In the second game, Tinian recovered from a 68-72 opening loss to Saipan World Resort after posting a 105-92 triumph over Pacific Islands Club.

Ringo Reyes led the host with 33 points, while Noel Sabordo added 24.

PIC dropped to a 0-2 start.

First Game

Aqua Resort Club 100 – Gapor 25, Camacho 22, Estolas 22, Fitial 15, Johanes 8, Ruluked 6.

Hyatt 98 – Arreza 28, Cruz 26, Lizama 16, Aquino 8, Mendoza 7, Libuw 5, Magno 5, Berline 2, Vargas 1.

Scoring by quarters: 30-25, 54-42, 74-71, 100-98.

Second Game

Tinian 105 – Ri. Reyes 33, Sabordo 24, Fernandez 13, R.J. Reyes 11, Ramirez 7, Mabansag 4, Advincula 3, Evangelista 3, Flores 3, Pavino 2, Cajayon 2.

PIC 91 – Sanciangco 22, Barbo 19, Abuy 17, Tudela 13, Kaipat 9, Fernandez 4, Tolentino 3, Duenas 2, Pungilug 2.

Scoring by quarters: 25-19, 36-39, 74-69, 105-91.

YVONNE

From Page 28

was racing against myself, racing against the clock," she said.

Bennett managed to make all these record-breaking performances after getting involved with athletics for only two years.

"It's was great to have these achievements in such a short time. I owe it to my coaches (Elias Rangamar and Robin Sapong) for training me and having patience to teach me techniques in sprint races," Bennett said.

Yvonne also thanked her twin sister, Yvette, who was the first one to try running the track, challenging the former to get involved with sprint races, too.

"My first sport was basketball. But when Yvette started running, we have this sort of competition among siblings, as she challenged me to beat her. The rest is history," Yvonne said.

After graduation this June, Yvonne is hoping to continue her study either at the Kapi'olani Community College in Honolulu, Hawaii or at the University of Guam.

"Hopefully, I can also run for a college team. I want to go to either Hawaii or Guam so I can be closer to home and continue to represent the CNMI in various competitions," Yvonne said.

Yvonne admitted it will require more hard work to be selected for a college team, so she will continue training here, while preparing for her next journey.

"I need to work more on my strength, the power off the blocks," Yvonne added.

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS

EASTERN CONFERENCE

Atlantic Division

	W	L	Pct	GB
Boston	46	12	.793	–
Philadelphia	27	28	.491	17 1/2
New Jersey	25	32	.439	20 1/2
New York	24	32	.429	21
Toronto	23	36	.390	23 1/2

Central Division

Cleveland	44	11	.800	–
Detroit	27	28	.491	17
Milwaukee	28	31	.475	18
Chicago	26	31	.456	19
Indiana	24	35	.407	22

Southeast Division

Orlando	41	15	.732	–
Atlanta	32	24	.571	9
Miami	30	26	.536	11
Charlotte	22	35	.386	19 1/2
Washington	13	43	.232	28

WESTERN CONFERENCE

Southwest Division

San Antonio	38	17	.691	–
Houston	36	21	.632	3
New Orleans	33	22	.600	5
Dallas	33	23	.589	5 1/2
Memphis	15	41	.268	23 1/2

Northwest Division

Denver	37	20	.649	–
Portland	35	21	.625	1 1/2
Utah	34	23	.596	3
Minnesota	18	38	.321	18 1/2
Oklahoma City	13	44	.228	24

Pacific Division

LA Lakers	47	10	.825	–
Phoenix	32	24	.571	14 1/2
Golden State	20	37	.351	27
LA Clippers	14	43	.246	33
Sacramento	12	46	.207	35 1/2

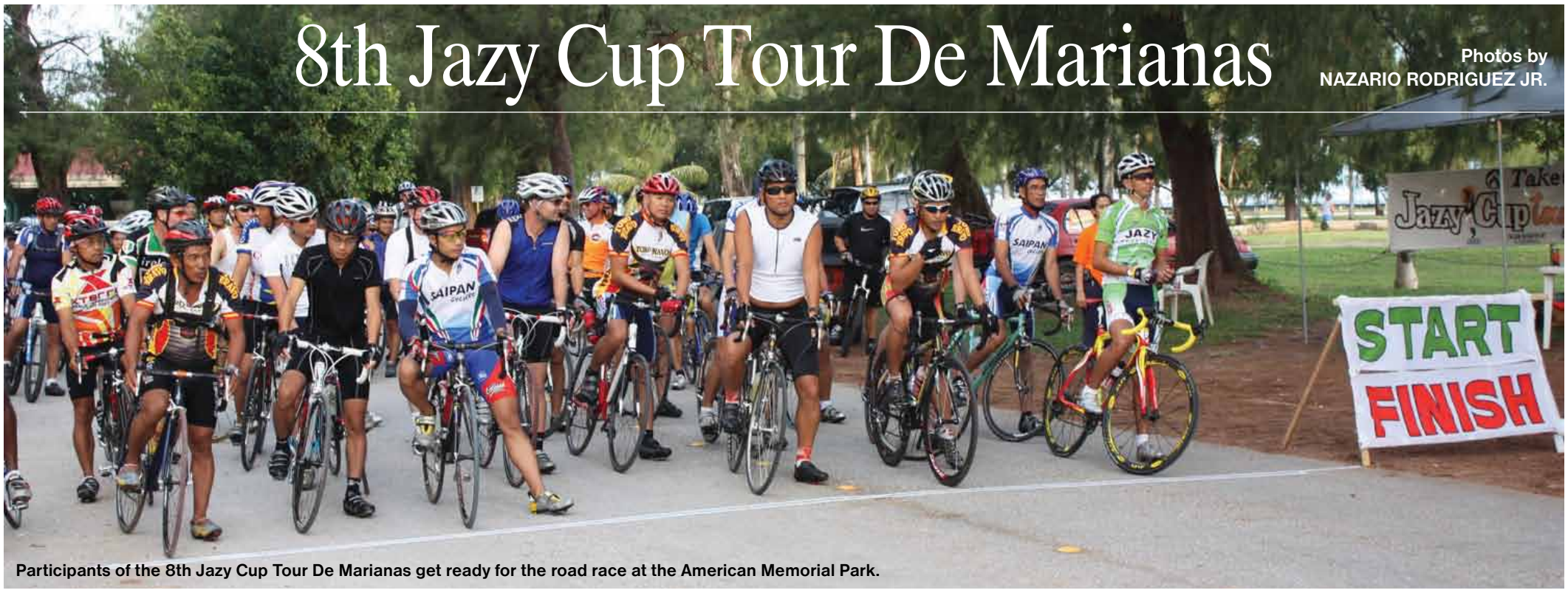
Yesterday's Games

Miami 103, Detroit 91
Cleveland 94, Memphis 79
Houston 98, Portland 94
San Antonio 93, Dallas 76
Toronto 118, Minnesota 100
LA Lakers 107, Oklahoma City 93
Chicago 120, Orlando 102
Phoenix 112, Charlotte 102

BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

8th Jazy Cup Tour De Marianas

Photos by NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.



Participants of the 8th Jazy Cup Tour De Marianas get ready for the road race at the American Memorial Park.

Cows cross the road as the bikers descend from the hilltop of Suicide Cliff.

The cyclists taking part in the 8th Jazy Cup Tour De Marianas line up at the starting line for the individual time trials at the Marianas Country Club on Saturday.

From left, tour organizer Mylene Garcia, Sayaka Torii (Hard Rock Café S&M Supervisor), Bobby Mandapat (expert division 2nd overall), Ogasawara Takahiro (champion), Butch Sublemente (3rd), and Tour De Marianas founder Jazy Garcia.

Four riders race near the finish line of the individual time trials.

Ben Babauta arrives at the finish line of the individual time trials at Suicide Cliff.

Alberto Cataina Jr. checks in first in the road race on the way to topping the overall standing in the mountain bike division after only finishing second in the individual time trials.

The Top 3 winners, Bobby Mandapat (2nd), Ogasawara Takahiro (1st) and Butch Sublemente (3rd) show off their prizes during the awards ceremony at the Minachom Atdao Pavillion.

Race volunteers, sponsors, and tour organizers gather for a group shot after the awards ceremony that concluded the two-day event.

Russ Quinn is the first rider to check in for the novice division of the road race.

Gualo Rai tops Inchcape in Navy Hill caging

Gualo Rai saved the best for last, outscoring Inchcape in the fourth quarter en route to a 91-85 come-from-behind win at the start of the Masters division of the 2009 Navy Hill Friendship Basketball League Tuesday night at the Garapan Basketball Court.

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Saipan Tribune
Sports

Wade's big night leads Heat past Detroit

Not only did Dwyane Wade continue his run of career highs, he sent the Detroit Pistons to a new low.

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Steroids issue fueled by media—Royster

Ex-MLB player says 'roids has no place in sports

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

Former Major League Baseball player and team manager Jerry Royster said the steroids issue currently raging in America's favorite pastime is an issue created by the media.

"The steroids issue is more of a media thing [rather] than about baseball…They are talking about the past, instead of dealing with the future," said Royster, who is on Saipan with the Lotte Giants of Korea for spring training.

He said before there were no rules with regards to the use of performance enhancing drugs and while he heard a lot of players were using it, it was not a big issue.

"We heard about it but it is something that [was] never seen," said Royster, who also served as a team manager for the Milwaukee Brewers.

NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
Jerry Royster, right, stresses a point with one of his coaching staff at the Lotte Giants' spring training on Saipan. He is the first foreign manager in the history of Korean professional baseball.

Aside from managing in the big league, Royster also played third baseman for several Major League teams.

"I was pretty close to my players and I don't think they knowingly took the drugs," he added.

Royster said it was his policy with the Brewers not to engage in illegal activities because "you can't do anything that is illegal."

He advised younger players not to use steroids or other illegal performance enhancers because "there is no place for steroids in sports."

The problem right now, he said, is that everybody is talking what had happened in the past.

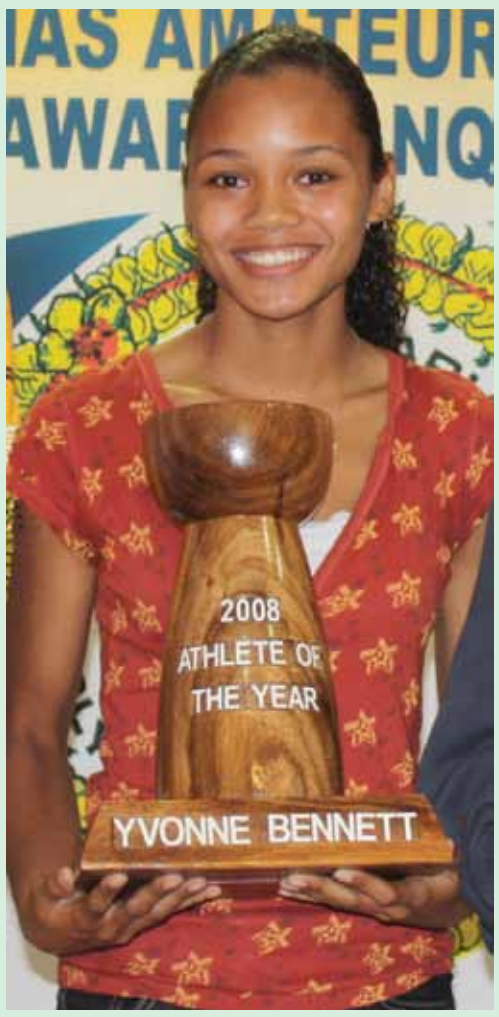
"The commissioner is doing a good job in dealing with the problem," noted Royster.

But in his personal opinion, he said that the best thing to do now is to strictly enforce the rules against those who violate it.

The BALCO steroid scandal, which involved allegations that top baseball players had used illegal performance-enhancing drugs, pushed MLB to issue harsher penalties for steroid users.

See STEROIDS on Page 26

Yvonne gets early graduation gift



ROSELYN B. MONROYO
Yvonne Bennett is all smiles as she receives the 2008 NMASA Female Athlete of the Year award during the 2009 NMASA Annual Awards Banquet last week at the Seaside Hall of Saipan Grand Hotel.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Second of a six-part series

ATHLETES of the YEAR

Micronesia's sprint queen Yvonne Bennett received an early graduation gift last week after winning the 2008 NMASA Athlete of the Year award.

"I will be graduating in June and getting recognition from NMASA last week is a great gift for my graduation," Bennett said in telephone interview with *Saipan Tribune*.

Bennett was named top female athlete of 2008 for her record-breaking performances in sprint races in local and regional tournaments.

In May during the McDonald's All Schools meet, the Kagman High School student clocked in at 13.04 seconds in the 100m race to set a CNMI national record and posted 26.94 in the 200m run to record another national mark.

Bennett's third record-setting run was in the 400m race, where she timed in at 1:03.50, also during the All Schools meet.

In June, Bennett was named Fastest Woman in Micronesia after timing in at 12.99 seconds in the 100m sprint finals in the 2008 Oceania Area Championships. In the same tournament, she also reset the CNMI records in 400m (1:01.83) and 200m (26.65 seconds).

She held her ground against seasoned sprinters, who have been to top-caliber races outside Oceania.

"I was not intimidated by those runners fasters than me, as I was not racing against them. I

See YVONNE on Page 26

Dumapit leads winners of Lion's Club roll-off

By NAZARIO RODRIGUEZ JR.
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REPORTER

Raul Dumapit ran away with the Class A championship of the Saipan Filipino-American Lions Club Classified Bowling Tournament held over the weekend at the Saipan Bowling Center.

Bernard Paraiso, meanwhile, topped Class B of the handicap-computed tournament with Marion McKenzie snatching the championship in Class C.

Dumapit won Class A by beating Robert Talavera in the

See DUMAPIT on Page 26

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Filipino-American Lions Club Classified Bowling Tournament Class A winner Raul Dumapit is flanked by runners-up Kitz Barja, left, and Robert Talavera.

Aqua edges Hyatt, Tinian whips PIC

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Aqua Resort Club won the battle of unbeaten teams in the 2009 Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino Invitational Basketball League, slipping past Hyatt

See AQUA on Page 26

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Best Player of the Game Ziddy Johanes, second left, of Aqua Resort Club is joined by Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino general manager Tom Liu, left, and the hotel's officials for a group photo after a game in the 2009 Tinian Dynasty Hotel & Casino Invitational Basketball League Monday night at the Tinian Municipal Gymnasium.